

Tuesday, 16 November 2021

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AUDIT AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

You are summoned to a meeting of the Audit and General Purposes Committee which will be held in Committee Room 1, Woodgreen, Witney OX28 1NB on **Wednesday, 24 November 2021 at 6.00 pm.**



Giles Hughes
Chief Executive

To: Members of the Audit and General Purposes Committee

Councillors: Alex Postan (Chairman), Dan Levy (Vice-Chair), Jake Acock, Joy Aitman, Luci Ashbourne, Andrew Beaney, Julian Cooper, Rupert Dent, Colin Dingwall, Harry Eaglestone, Duncan Enright, Gill Hill, Richard Langridge, Martin McBride, Elizabeth Poskitt, Harry St John and Alex Wilson.

Recording of Proceedings – The law allows the public proceedings of Council, Cabinet, and Committee Meetings to be recorded, which includes filming as well as audio-recording. Photography is also permitted. By participating in this meeting, you are consenting to be filmed.

As a matter of courtesy, if you intend to record any part of the proceedings please let the Democratic Services officers know prior to the start of the meeting.

AGENDA

1. **Minutes of Previous Meeting (Pages 3 - 6)**
To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 23 September 2021.
2. **Apologies for Absence**
To receive any apologies for absence.
3. **Declarations of Interest**
To receive any declarations from Members of the Committee on any items to be considered at the meeting
4. **Participation of the Public**
To receive any submissions from members of the public, in accordance with the Council's Rules of Procedure.
5. **Statement of Accounts 2020/2021 (Pages 7 - 152)**

Purpose:

To present the Council's audited Statement of Accounts for the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021 to enable the Committee to consider and approve the Council's accounts.

Recommendations

- (a) That the Grant Thornton Audit Findings for West Oxfordshire District Council report be noted;
- (b) That the Statement of Accounts 2020/2021, including the Annual Governance Statement be approved; and
- (c) That the Chief Finance Officer and the Chair of the Committee be authorised to write a letter of representation on behalf of the Committee and Council to Grant Thornton to enable the opinion to be issued.

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the
Audit and General Purposes Committee
Held in the at 6.00 pm on **Thursday, 23 September 2021**

PRESENT

Councillors: Alex Postan (Chairman), Dan Levy (Vice-Chair), Rupert Dent, Colin Dingwall, Harry Eaglestone, Duncan Enright, Gill Hill, Martin McBride, Elizabeth Poskitt, Dean Temple and Alex Wilson.

Officers: Elizabeth Griffiths (Chief Finance Officer, Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer), Amy Bridgewater-Carnall (Democratic Services Manager), Emma Cathcart (Counter Fraud Unit Manager), Lucy Cater (SWAP) and Michelle Ouzman (Strategic Support Officer).

Also present via video link: Peter Barber, Grant Thornton.

12 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 June 2021 were approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record, subject to the following amendments:

Minute Number 8 – External Auditor 2020/21 Audit Plan – paragraph 4 be amended to add the words “For comparison, Councillor Postan requested that the next triennial review be accompanied by a non-binding example of a calculation to show surplus or deficit on the assumption that the interest rate basis was set at 1% higher than the GAD rate at the time of the triennial review.”

Minute Number 11 – Member Questions:

Paragraph 3 be amended to read “Councillor Postan highlighted a risk that the Council’s position as the founders of the 2020 vision / Publica plan, any new Council membership would have the effect of diluting the importance of its interests and that effort should be made into scrutiny of this possibility.

Paragraph 4 be amended to include the words “ without contributing to the cost of setting up.”

13 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ashbourne and Cooper.

Councillor Temple substituted for Councillor St John.

14 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest received.

15 Participation of the Public

No requests were received.

16 External Audit Progress Report & Sector Update

The Committee received an update report from a representative of the Council’s External Auditor, Grant Thornton who had joined the meeting via video link. Mr Barber addressed Members and apologies for being unable to attend the meeting in person. Mr Barber outlined the reasons for the delay in submitting the audit of the Council’s financial statement.

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Members were advised that whilst work had commenced in early July 2021, progress had been slower than anticipated due to a number of factors including resource challenges at Grant Thornton. This combined with working virtually, an increased volume of work and additional scrutiny from the regulator had resulted in Grant Thornton needing to revise their completion timetable.

Members questioned Mr Barber on a number of aspects including whether the difficulties this year may impact on future years, the implications of the delay and the unique aspects of local government accounting compared to the corporate sector.

Mr Barber advised that Grant Thornton were looking to strengthen their capacity and resource and outlined the difficulties in recruitment which had been exacerbated by Covid-19. With regards to the implications of the delay, it was not felt there would be any other than an impact on staff. The Deputy Chief Executive assured members that Grant Thornton and Council officers were working very hard to complete the work. She advised that the Finance team was now up to capacity and the delay was unfortunate. She felt the Committee should applaud them and the Finance team, who were about to move into budgeting.

Councillor Postan reiterated that there was no risk of a penalty and the audit should be of a high quality. Mr Barber agreed that the co-operation with Council officers had been excellent.

Councillor Postan concluded that the comments from Mr Barber had been taken on board and proposed that Members note the progress so far. It was hoped that the audit would be complete by the end of November at which point the Committee would meet again.

Resolved that the update be noted.

17 Internal Audit Progress Report

The Committee received a report from the Council's Internal Audit Services, SWAP, which set out the work undertaken by SWAP for the Council since the last meeting of this Committee. The report followed the risk-based auditing principles and, therefore, was an opportunity for the Committee to be aware of emerging issues which had resulted from SWAP involvement.

The progress report enabled the Committee to monitor the work of the Internal Audit Service and ensure that it remained effective. It also provided the Committee with assurance opinions over areas reviewed within the reporting period, details of audit recommendations and the outcome of follow-up reviews conducted on previous audit recommendations.

Lucy Cater, from SWAP introduced the report and advised that this also included an audit of the Authority's response to Covid-19. She highlighted to members the high priority findings and agreed actions as outlined in Appendix D to the report.

Appendix B to the report detailed the Audit Plan Progress and explained those audits that were in draft or in progress in 2020/21. The internal audit final reports included were for the following service areas: Payroll; Accounts Payable; Human Resources (Learning and Development) and Data Recovery Capabilities (although due to the sensitive nature of the audit the report was not published).

Councillor Levy raised a query relating to the Procurement Audit 41029 detailed on page 43 of the report. Officers advised that, although marked as closed, this recommendation would be reviewed as part of the new audit.

Following a question from Councillor McBride, officers outlined the audits that had been looked at specifically from a West Oxfordshire District Council viewpoint. Discussions continued as to whether each Council was charged an equal amount for the service SWAP provided and officers advised that they could not say for certain what figures were agreed

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when Publica joined SWAP. It was noted that officers would request the information from the Locality Director along with a summary of the principles agreed.

Having considered the report and having heard from the officers present, the Committee

Resolved that the report is noted.

18 Counter Fraud Unit Report

The Committee received a report from the Counter Fraud Unit Manager which provided the Committee with assurance over the counter fraud activities of the Council. It was noted that direct updates would continue to be provided biannually.

Work plans were presented to the Committee detailing progress and results, for consideration and comment as the body charged with governance in this area. The current work plan for 2021/22 was attached at Annex A to the report.

The report noted that the Counter Fraud Unit (CFU) had been supporting work streams created as a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic by providing advice relating to fraud risk and abuse, most significantly in relation to the Business Grant Schemes. To date, the team had received 274 cases to review with a number being confirmed as eligible and the grant awarded, however there had been some instances of fraud, error or ineligibility and these were listed in section 2.2 of the report.

The report also gave an overview of the wide range of enforcement and investigation work carried out since 1 April 2021, in addition to the annual work undertaken from the work plan.

The Counter Fraud Unit Manager introduced the report, explained the work undertaken and answered questions from Members.

In relation to the Business Grant Schemes, officers advised that information was cross matched with Companies House, along with relevant accounts and trading checks. Officers assured that they would confirm that a business was a legitimate trading entity and this confidence had been underpinned by the post-payment audit recently carried out.

Members were keen that the positive work of the team should be publicised and were advised that the Communications team were aware. It was agreed that this could be a future newsletter item.

Councillor Levy highlighted the error in paragraph 7.2 inferring that West Oxfordshire was part of the Gloucestershire county.

Having considered the report and having heard from the officers present, the Committee

Resolved that the report and work plan at Annex A, are noted.

19 Use of the Internet and Social Media in Investigations and Enforcement Policy

The Committee received a report from the Counter Fraud Unit Manager which presented Members with a new Use of the Internet and Social Media in Investigations and Enforcement Policy, attached at Annex A to the report, for comment.

The report advised that the Council's Policies were based on the legislative requirements of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) and the Investigatory Powers Act 2016 (IPA) and the Codes of Practice relating to directed surveillance and the acquisition of communications data. Councils had come under increased scrutiny in this area by the Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office (IPCO) during inspections and there were a number of recommendations in their annual reports, procedures and guidance. This included that evidence should demonstrate that consideration had been given to whether the activity

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could be considered surveillance and the appropriate authorisation sought.

Existing arrangements had been reviewed and the policy for ensuring compliance had been developed.

The Counter Fraud Unit Manager explained that staff should not be using any personal social media accounts and that individuals had a right to privacy. Officers would use Council accounts to gather intelligence correctly.

Following a question from Councillor Levy, officers confirmed that the confidential procedure document which supports the policy was not being shared in order to keep it out of the public domain, however, the correct level of senior authority had been involved in the creation of it.

Further discussion evolved including the use of online shopping sites such as Ebay and Gumtree to investigate trading activity, the triggers to investigate on line if suspicions were aroused and the importance of logging those decisions.

Councillor Dent raised a query relating to Planning Enforcement and was advised that this was an area that was subject to prosecution. Officers confirmed that any activity that was classed as a criminal offence would apply, for example unlicensed breeding.

Having considered the report and having heard from the officers present, the Committee

Resolved that the Use of the Internet and Social Media in Investigations and Enforcement Policy is noted and recommended to Cabinet for approval.

20 Introduction of a Committee Work Programme

Members received a report from Democratic Services which introduced a Committee work programme for 2021/22. Prior to this point, the Committee had not had a formal work programme in place and officers explained that this helped all Members see what was coming forwards and enabled report authors to plan their workloads accordingly.

Councillor Postan advised the meeting that the Growth Board Scrutiny Panel had action sheets for individual items which helped to note progress. He agreed to share this with officers.

Having considered the report and having heard from the officers present, the Committee


Resolved that work programme be approved.

21 Minutes of Miscellaneous Licensing Sub-Committee

The minutes of the Miscellaneous Licensing Sub-Committees held on 18 March and 2 July 2021 were noted.

The Meeting closed 7.22pm

CHAIRMAN

 <p>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</p>	<p>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</p>
<p>Name and date of Committee</p>	<p>Audit and General Purposes Committee: Wednesday 24 November 2021</p>
<p>Report Number</p>	<p>Agenda Item No. 5</p>
<p>Subject</p>	<p>Statement of Accounts 2020/2021</p>
<p>Wards affected</p>	<p>All</p>
<p>Accountable member</p>	<p>Cllr Suzi Coul, Cabinet Member for Finance Email: suzi.coul@westoxon.gov.uk</p>
<p>Accountable officer</p>	<p>Elizabeth Griffiths, Chief Finance Officer Email: elizabeth.griffiths@westoxon.gov.uk</p>
<p>Summary/Purpose</p>	<p>This report presents the Council’s audited Statement of Accounts for the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021 to enable the Committee to consider and approve the Council’s accounts.</p>
<p>Annexes</p>	<p>Annex A – Grant Thornton report: “The Audit Findings for West Oxfordshire District Council” Annex B – Statement of Accounts 2020/21 including the Annual Governance Statement Annex C – Letter of Representation</p>
<p>Recommendations</p>	<p>a) That the Grant Thornton Audit Findings for West Oxfordshire District Council report be noted; b) That the Statement of Accounts 2020/21, including the Annual Governance Statement be approved; and c) That the Chief Finance Officer and the Chair of the Committee be authorised to write a letter of representation on behalf of the Committee and Council to Grant Thornton to enable the opinion to be issued.</p>
<p>Corporate priorities</p>	<p>Modern Council Services and Sustainable Finance: Delivering excellent modern services whilst ensuring the financial sustainability of the Council</p>
<p>Key Decision</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Exempt</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Consultees</p>	<p>N/A</p>

I. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. The Council's Chief Finance Officer is responsible for ensuring that the statement of accounts is prepared and published by 31 May following the end of a year. In a more typical year, the draft Statement of Accounts would have been presented to the July meeting of this Committee for review. The Government extended the deadline for the production of the draft accounts to 31st July and the audit of the Accounts from 31st July to 30th September.
- 1.2. The Council submitted its draft Statement of Accounts to the External Auditors, Grant Thornton, on 1st July.
- 1.3. The public inspection period ran from 2nd August to 10th September. There were no objections received during this inspection period.
- 1.4. Due to resourcing difficulties on the part of the external auditors Grant Thornton, mainly caused by a general backlog in Council audits from the previous year, the audit of the accounts for the year ended 31st March 2021 did not meet the 30th September publication date. A revised target deadline of the November 24th Audit Committee meeting was agreed.
- 1.5. It is the role of Audit & General Purposes Committee to formally approve the Statement of Accounts, along with the Grant Thornton Audit Findings Report, on behalf of the Council, following the completion of the audit process. The Audit is now substantially complete with no material errors or adjustments to the financial statements identified.
- 1.6. The Statement of Accounts has been prepared in accordance with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21 ('the Code'). The Council is statutorily obliged under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 to prepare its Statement of Accounts in accordance with the Code.

2. STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

- 2.1. The four core statements within the Accounts are:

Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement:

The statement shows the accounting cost of services in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices (GAAP). The 'below the line' funding & accounting entries that bring the statement back to the movement on the General Fund (reversing items such as depreciation and accounting for pension contributions) form part of the Movement in Reserves Statement below.

Movement in Reserves Statement:

The statement details the movement in the year between reserves, from the surplus/deficit on provision of services in the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement, to the position on the Balance Sheet at 31 March, splitting the reserves into the usable reserves (which are available to spend) and unusable reserves which represent reserve held for accounting purposes (and are not available for use).

Balance Sheet:

The balance sheet depicts the assets and liabilities of the Authority, with the overall position representing the 'net worth' of the Council.

Cash Flow Statement:

The statement shows the year on year change in cash and cash equivalents (i.e. on demand deposits) available to the Council, as opposed to simply showing the movement in the bank balance.

- 2.2. The 'notes to the accounts' provide additional breakdown and disclosure of balances to support the primary statements.

Accounting Policies

- 2.3. The Council's Financial Rules state that the Chief Finance Officer is responsible for setting the Council's accounting policies. The Statement of Accounts is prepared based upon these policies.
- 2.4. Whilst it is the Chief Finance Officer's responsibility to set the policies, it is seen as best practice for this Committee to also agree the policies. The policies have a significant influence upon the Accounts which the Committee has responsibility for approving, following completion of the audit process.
- 2.5. The accounting policies are set out on pages 54 to 63 of the attached Statement of Accounts. There are no significant changes to note.

Revenue Outturn and Performance

- 2.6. The Council's approved revenue budget for 2020/21 was £15,307,830. The final outturn position saw the Council generate an under-spend of £48,753 against the revenue budget for the year.
- 2.7. The revenue outturn position was reported to Cabinet on 21st July 2021 (for a full breakdown of the outturn for the year, please refer to the Cabinet report, agenda item 6). At their meeting, Cabinet recommended to Council to transfer £10,267,787 of the revenue surplus to earmarked reserves and to increase the General Fund Balance by £48,753. Council subsequently approved the appropriations on 28th July 2021.

Reconciling the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and Movement in Reserves Statement to the Revenue Outturn position reported to Cabinet

- 2.8. The Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (CI&ES) (page 8 of the Accounts) shows the accounting cost in the year of providing services. The statement is prepared based under International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) and therefore does not match the figure presented to Cabinet as part of the year-end outturn report, which is prepared on the basis of internal reporting practices. To reconcile the figures, the CI&ES and Movement in Reserves Statement (MiRS) need to be read together as the MiRS reverses out or adjusts some Income and Expenditure items to make them compatible with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting, and UK statutory requirements.

- 2.9. Note BI “Expenditure and Funding Analysis” on page 12 of the Accounts reconciles the difference between statutory financial reporting and those figures reported internally to Cabinet. The CI&ES declares a surplus on the provision of services of £2,768,463. This figure includes changes in asset values and pension fund accounting which are not reported to Members as they are statutory accounting adjustments and do not impact upon council tax payer financing of the Council. These are set out in the column headed “Adjs. between accounting and funding basis” and amount to £5.9m. Once adjustments to earmarked reserves of £8.035m are taken into account, the net contribution to the Council’s General Fund Balance is £48,753 ($£2,768k + £5,929k - £8,649k = £48k$).

Key Balance Sheet Movements

- 2.10. The balance sheet represents the value or ‘net worth’ of the Council as at 31st March 2021. The key movements in the balance sheet between 31st March 2020 and 31st March 2021 and the reasons for the largest changes are summarised below.
- 2.11. The value of Property, Plant and Equipment has decreased by £1.3 million. This is primarily due to the revaluation downwards of our operational buildings, leisure facilities and car parks, reflecting the difficult market conditions created by Covid in the office & leisure sectors.
- 2.12. Non-current (long term) debtors have increased by £7.2m year-on-year. This is primarily as a result of a loan of £5.8 million given to Cottsway Housing Association to facilitate the delivery of affordable and social housing developments within the district; and a loan of £2m to Southill Solar to deliver on the Council priority of taking action locally on climate change.
- 2.13. Short term debtors have increased by £13.2 million and short term creditors have increased by £15.9 million. While in a normal year fluctuations in these balances would be expected, in 2020/21 these were hugely exacerbated due to the size of transactions with central government departments and the Council’s partners. Specifically the Business Rates deficit, S31 compensation grant and Business Support grants.
- In short term creditors the Council is required to return to Central Government £9.6m for S31 grant and £5.6m for Business Support grants.
- In short term debtors Central Government’s debt to the Council rose by £9.3m, representing their share of the Business Rates deficit, with Oxfordshire County Council’s share of the deficit standing at £3.1m.
- 2.14. The valuation of the pension fund net assets and liabilities which is shown in note F1 to the accounts, has shown an increase in liability of £5.58 million. The valuation of the pension fund does fluctuate each year and is based upon a number of actuarial assumptions. At 31 March 2020 the Council’s share of the Oxfordshire Pension Fund stands at a net liability of £35.003 million.
- 2.15. The triennial pension fund valuation was completed in March 2019 and establishes the authority’s pension fund contributions for the next three years with effect from 1 April 2020. The annual valuation for accounting purposes does not therefore impact upon the Council’s physical pension fund contributions during 2020/21.

- 2.16. The 'general fund balance' has increased by £48,754 from 1 April to 31 March. The movement represents the remaining underspend in the year (after transfers to earmarked reserves). The general fund balance represents the unallocated revenue reserves of the Council. At 31 March the General Fund balance stood at £12,808,751.
- 2.17. The Council's 'earmarked reserves' represent resources that have been set-aside by the Council for specific projects or money to provide particular schemes in the future. Overall contributions to earmarked reserves amounted to £13.301 million, including £2.2m of ARG and COMF grants, £1 million to help deliver Covid-19 response and recovery initiatives in 2021/22, £7m to fund the Council's share of the Business Rates deficit and £1.5m to fund growth in the Publica contract. Expenditure amounted to £5.266m. Of the money spent, £3.6m was a one off additional contribution to the pension fund, £369,000 funded the continued roll out of high speed broadband and £192,000 funded the implementation of a new Revenues & Benefits system. The value of earmarked reserves has therefore increased by £8.035m.
- 2.18. The 'Net Assets' or 'Net Worth of the Council has decreased by £5,523,781. The main contributing factor is the increase in pension liability. Although the Council faces significant challenges in 2021/22 and beyond, the Council is generally in a healthy position at the end of the 2020/21 financial year with an appropriate level of reserves. The Council remains financially secure and sustainable for the foreseeable future.

3. AUDIT FINDINGS

- 3.1. At the time of writing this report, the audit is materially complete.
- 3.2. Attached to this report at Annex A is the Audit Findings Report for West Oxfordshire District Council. The report details all of the work that Grant Thornton has undertaken as part of their formal audit of the accounts. It outlines the key findings and matters arising from the statutory audit process.
- 3.3. The Statement of Accounts attached to this report represents the audited accounts following the completion of the audit and incorporate a number of recommendations of minor changes required following review by Grant Thornton.
- 3.4. Grant Thornton's work in the areas of Financial Instruments and the Collection Fund is still to be finalised but they have indicated that they expect to offer an unqualified audit opinion on 24th November.
- 3.5. Grant Thornton has not yet completed work on the Value for Money (VFM) conclusion in respect of the Council's arrangements for the year ended 31 March 2021. This work is still ongoing and at the time of preparing this report, the auditors have not identified any significant weaknesses in arrangements that require them to make a recommendation, however they will continue to undertake work on the Council's arrangements and update the Audit Committee.

Summary of changes resulting from the audit

- 3.6. The only audit adjustments currently made relate to misclassification and disclosure changes as outlined below.

Misclassification and disclosure changes

- 3.7. There is an unadjusted misstatement of £77,000 relating to the fair value of long term investments which have been understated on the balance sheet. Due to the timing of the finding and the level of misstatement no adjustment has been made as it is not considered material to the accuracy of the financial statements.
- 3.8. A small number of other misclassification and disclosure changes have been made to the accounts. These changes represent minor amendments, including changes to notes where expanded explanation has been necessary and other presentational adjustments (such as rounding within tables and the correction of spelling mistakes) to improve the quality of disclosures in the accounts. These have not been reported separately with Grant Thornton's report due to their insignificant nature. Although a number of changes have been made, they do not affect the 'net worth' of the Council.

The letter of representation

- 3.9. To complete the Audit process the Council is required to submit a letter of representation to Grant Thornton to complement the financial statements and to outline the areas considered in stating that the financial statements give a 'true and fair view' on the accounts, in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards and the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21 and applicable law.
- 3.10. The Chairman of the Audit & General Purposes Committee and the Chief Finance Officer are asked to sign the Letter of Representation, under Recommendation (c) to this report. Grant Thornton is not able to issue their opinion on the accounts until the letter of representation has been received.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1. This report has no financial implications.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1. The Council is required to approve its Statement of Accounts in order to comply with Accounts and Audit (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020.

6. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 6.1. If the Audit and General Purposes Committee do not approve the audited Statement of Accounts the Council will not comply with the Accounts and Audit (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS AND RELATED DECISIONS

- 7.1. The following decisions are related to the report:
 - 26th February 2020 – The Council approved the 2020/21 budget.
 - 21st July 2021 – Cabinet approved the Revenue Outturn 2020/21 report.

The Audit Findings for West Oxfordshire District Council

Year ended 31 March 2021

West Oxfordshire District Council

6 November 2021

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This Audit Findings presents the observations arising from the audit that are significant to the responsibility of those charged with governance to oversee the financial reporting process, as required by International Standard on Auditing (UK) 260. Its contents have been discussed with management and the Audit and General Purposes Committee.

Name : Peter Barber
For Grant Thornton UK LLP
Date : 16 November 2021

The contents of this report relate only to the matters which have come to our attention, which we believe need to be reported to you as part of our audit planning process. It is not a comprehensive record of all the relevant matters, which may be subject to change, and in particular we cannot be held responsible to you for reporting all of the risks which may affect the Council or all weaknesses in your internal controls. This report has been prepared solely for your benefit and should not be quoted in whole or in part without our prior written consent. We do not accept any responsibility for any loss occasioned to any third party acting, or refraining from acting on the basis of the content of this report, as this report was not prepared for, nor intended for, any other purpose.

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1. Headlines

This table summarises the key findings and other matters arising from the statutory audit of West Oxfordshire District Council ('the Council') and the preparation of the Council's financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2021 for those charged with governance.

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Financial Statements

Under International Standards of Audit (UK) (ISAs) and the National Audit Office (NAO) Code of Audit Practice ('the Code'), we are required to report whether, in our opinion:

- the Council's financial statements give a true and fair view of the financial position of the Council and its income and expenditure for the year; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the CIPFA/LASAAC code of practice on local authority accounting and prepared in accordance with the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.

We are also required to report whether other information published together with the audited financial statements (including the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) and Narrative Report, is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated.

We commenced our post-statements remote audit in July and as at 16 November 2021 our audit is substantially complete. Our findings are summarised on pages 5 to 17.

Our work to date has not identified any material errors or adjustments to the financial statements. No adjustments have been identified that have resulted in an adjustment to the Council's Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

We have recommended a small number of adjustments to improve the presentation of the financial statements as detailed in Appendix C. We have also raised recommendations for management as a result of our audit work in Appendix A. Our follow up of recommendations from the prior year's audit are detailed in Appendix B.

There are no matters arising to date which we are aware that would require modification of our audit opinion [Appendix E] or material changes to the financial statements.

Subject to completing our remaining audit procedures set out on page 5, receiving responses to our outstanding queries and having regard to any further national guidance, we anticipate issuing an unqualified audit opinion following the meeting of the Audit and General Purposes Committee on 24 November 2021.

We have concluded that the other information to be published with the financial statements, is consistent with our knowledge of your organisation and the financial statements we have audited.

1. Headlines

Value for Money (VFM) arrangements

Under the National Audit Office (NAO) Code of Audit Practice ('the Code'), we are required to consider whether the Council has put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. Auditors are now required to report in more detail on the Council's overall arrangements, as well as key recommendations on any significant weaknesses in arrangements identified during the audit.

Auditors are required to report their commentary on the Council's arrangements under the following specified criteria:

- Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness;
- Financial sustainability; and
- Governance

We have not yet completed all of our VFM work and so are not in a position to issue our Auditor's Annual Report. An audit letter explaining the reasons for the delay is attached in the Appendix G to this report. We expect to issue our Auditor's Annual Report by the end of January. This is in line with the National Audit Office's revised deadline, which requires the Auditor's Annual Report to be issued no more than three months after the date of the opinion on the financial statements.

As part of our work, we considered whether there were any risks of significant weakness in the Council's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. We identified a risk in respect of financial sustainability. Our work on this risk is underway and an update is set out in the value for money arrangements section of this report.

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Statutory duties

The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 ('the Act') also requires us to:

- report to you if we have applied any of the additional powers and duties ascribed to us under the Act; and
- to certify the closure of the audit.

We have not exercised any of our additional statutory powers or duties.

We expect to certify the completion of the audit upon the completion of our work on the Council's VFM arrangements, which will be reported in our Auditor's report in January 2022.

Significant Matters

We did not encounter any significant difficulties or identify any significant matters arising during our audit.

Acknowledgements

We would like to take this opportunity to record our appreciation for the assistance and timely collaboration provided by the finance team and other staff during these unprecedented times.

2. Financial Statements

Overview of the scope of our audit

This Audit Findings Report presents the observations arising from the audit that are significant to the responsibility of those charged with governance to oversee the financial reporting process, as required by International Standard on Auditing (UK) 260 and the Code of Audit Practice ("the Code"). Its contents have been discussed with management and the Audit and General Purposes Committee.

As auditor we are responsible for performing the audit, in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) and the Code, which is directed towards forming and expressing an opinion on the financial statements that have been prepared by management with the oversight of those charged with governance. The audit of the financial statements does not relieve management or those charged with governance of their responsibilities for the preparation of the financial statements.

Audit approach

Our audit approach was based on a thorough understanding of the Council's business and is risk based, and in particular included:

- An evaluation of the Council's internal controls environment, including its IT systems and controls; and
- Substantive testing on significant transactions and material account balances, including the procedures outlined in this report in relation to the key audit risks.

We have not had to alter our audit plan, as communicated to you on 24 June 2021.

Conclusion

We have substantially completed our audit of your financial statements and subject to outstanding queries being resolved, we anticipate issuing an unqualified audit opinion following the Audit and General Purposes Committee meeting on 24 Nov 2021, as detailed in (Appendix E). These outstanding items include:

- completion of the work on Financial Instruments;
- completion of the work on the Collection Fund;
- receipt of management representation letter (see Appendix F); and
- review of the final set of financial statements.

Acknowledgements

We would like to take this opportunity to record our appreciation for the assistance provided by the finance team and other staff. The audit of the Council has again been completed remotely, with good use made of video calling and screen sharing.

Signed:



2. Financial Statements



Our approach to materiality

The concept of materiality is fundamental to the preparation of the financial statements and the audit process and applies not only to the monetary misstatements but also to disclosure requirements and adherence to acceptable accounting practice and applicable law.

We have revised the performance materiality due to the actual gross expenditure changing significantly from that at the planning stage resulting in a review of the appropriateness of the materiality figure.

We detail in the table opposite our determination of materiality for West Oxfordshire District Council

	Planning	Final (£)	Qualitative factors considered
Materiality for the financial statements	890,000	1,000,000	Materiality equates to approximately 1.9% of your gross expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2021. This is consistent with the benchmark used in the prior period. This assessment reflects that the Council operates in a stable, publicly funded environment and no significant control deficiencies have been identified.
Performance materiality	667,500	750,000	We have determined this using 75% of materiality, this reflects that there is no history of deficiencies or large number of misstatements. In addition, there has been no change in the accounts preparation team, therefore this benchmark is deemed to be appropriate.
Trivial matters	45,000	50,000	This is based on 5% materiality, which we consider to be an appropriate threshold.
Materiality for senior officer remuneration	5,000	5,000	This reflects the public sensitivity in the pay of senior officers in the public sector.



2. Financial Statements - Significant risks

Significant risks are defined by ISAs (UK) as risks that, in the judgement of the auditor, require special audit consideration. In identifying risks, audit teams consider the nature of the risk, the potential magnitude of misstatement, and its likelihood. Significant risks are those risks that have a higher risk of material misstatement.

This section provides commentary on the significant audit risks communicated in the Audit Plan.

Risks identified in our Audit Plan

Commentary

Management override of controls

Under ISA (UK) 240 there is a non-rebuttable presumed risk that the risk of management over-ride of controls is present in all entities.

We therefore identified management override of control, in particular journals, management estimates and transactions outside the course of business as a significant risk, which was one of the most significant assessed risks of material misstatement.

We have:

- evaluated the design effectiveness of management controls over journals;
- analysed the journals listing and determined the criteria for selecting high risk unusual journals;
- tested unusual journals recorded during the year and after the draft accounts stage for appropriateness and corroboration;
- gained an understanding of the accounting estimates and critical judgements applied by management and considered their reasonableness with regard to corroborative evidence; and
- evaluated the rationale for any changes in accounting policies, estimates or significant unusual transactions.

Our testing of estimates, judgements and journals has not identified any evidence of management override of controls.

2. Financial Statements - Significant risks

Risks identified in our Audit Plan

Commentary

The revenue cycle includes fraudulent transactions (rebutted)

Under ISA (UK) 240 there is a rebuttable presumed risk that revenue may be misstated due to the improper recognition of revenue.

This presumption can be rebutted if the auditor concludes that there is no risk of material misstatement due to fraud relating to revenue recognition.

Having considered the risk factors set out in ISA240 and the nature of the revenue streams at the Council, we have determined that the risk of fraud arising from revenue recognition can be rebutted, because:

- there is little incentive to manipulate revenue recognition
- opportunities to manipulate revenue recognition are very limited
- the culture and ethical frameworks of local authorities, including West Oxfordshire District Council mean that all forms of fraud are seen as unacceptable.

We have reconsidered this as part of our audit work on the financial statements and have not changed our assessment and therefore we confirm that we do not consider this to be a significant risk for West Oxfordshire District Council.

Our audit work has not identified any issues in respect of improper revenue recognition.

The expenditure cycle includes fraudulent transactions (rebutted)

Practice Note 10: Audit of Financial Statements of Public Sector Bodies in the United Kingdom (PN10) states:

"As most public bodies are net spending bodies, then the risk of material misstatement due to fraud related to expenditure may be greater than the risk of material misstatements due to fraud related to revenue recognition". Public sector auditors therefore need to consider whether they have any significant concerns about fraudulent financial reporting of expenditure which would need to be treated as a significant risk for the audit.

We have rebutted this presumed risk for West Oxfordshire District Council because:

- expenditure is well controlled and the Council has a strong control environment; and
- the Council has clear and transparent reporting of its financial plans and financial position to the Council.

We therefore do not consider this to be a significant risk for West Oxfordshire District Council.

We have reconsidered this as part of our audit work on the financial statements and have not changed our assessment and therefore we confirm that we do not consider this to be a significant risk for West Oxfordshire District Council.

Our audit work has not identified any issues in respect of improper expenditure recognition.

2. Financial Statements - Significant risks

Risks identified in our Audit Plan

Commentary

Valuation of land and buildings

The Council revalues its land and buildings on a rolling five-yearly basis. This valuation represents a significant estimate by management in the financial statements due to the size of the numbers involved (£69 million in 2019/20) and the sensitivity of this estimate to changes in key assumptions. Additionally, management will need to ensure the carrying value in the Council's financial statements is not materially different from the current value at the financial statements date, where a rolling programme is used.

We therefore identified valuation of land and buildings, particularly revaluations and impairments, as a significant risk, which was one of the most significant assessed risks of material misstatement, and a key audit matter.

We have:

- evaluated management's processes and assumptions for the calculation of the estimate, the instructions issued to valuation experts and the scope of their work;
- evaluated the competence, capabilities and objectivity of the valuation expert;
- written to the valuer to confirm the basis on which the valuation was carried out;
- challenged the information and assumptions used by the valuer to assess completeness and consistency with our understanding, the Council's valuer's report and the assumptions that underpin the valuation;
- tested revaluations made during the year to see if they had been input correctly into the Council's asset register; and
- evaluated the assumptions made by the valuer for those assets revalued at 31 March 2021. For the assets not formally revalued in year we have assessed how management has satisfied themselves that these assets are not materially different to the current value at the year end.

Our audit work has not identified any material issues in respect of the valuation of land and buildings.

Valuation of investment properties

The Council revalues its investment properties annually. This valuation represents a significant estimate by management in the financial statements due to the size of the numbers involved (£52 million in 2019/20) and the sensitivity of this estimate to changes in key assumptions.

We therefore identified valuation of investment properties, particularly revaluations and impairments, as a significant risk, which was one of the most significant assessed risks of material misstatement, and a key audit matter.

We have:

- evaluated management's processes and assumptions for the calculation of the estimate, the instructions issued to valuation experts and the scope of their work;
- evaluated the competence, capabilities and objectivity of the valuation expert;
- written to the valuer to confirm the basis on which the valuation was carried out;
- challenged the information and assumptions used by the valuer to assess completeness and consistency with our understanding, the Council's valuer's report and the assumptions that underpin the valuation;
- tested revaluations made during the year to see if they had been input correctly into the Council's asset register; and
- evaluated the assumptions made by the valuer for those assets revalued at 31 March 2021.

Our audit work has not identified any issues in respect of the valuation of investment properties.

2. Financial Statements - Significant risks

Risks identified in our Audit Plan

Commentary

Valuation of pension fund net liability

The Authority's pension fund net liability, as reflected in its balance sheet as the net defined benefit liability, represents a significant estimate in the financial statements.

The pension fund net liability is considered a significant estimate due to the size of the numbers involved (£29m in the Authority's balance sheet in 2019/20) and the sensitivity of the estimate to changes in key assumptions.

The methods applied in the calculation of the IAS 19 estimates are routine and commonly applied by all actuarial firms in line with the requirements set out in the Code of practice for local government accounting (the applicable financial reporting framework). We have therefore concluded that there is not a significant risk of material misstatement in the IAS 19 estimate due to the methods and models used in their calculation.

The source data used by the actuaries to produce the IAS 19 estimates is provided by administering authorities and employers. We do not consider this to be a significant risk as this is easily verifiable.

The actuarial assumptions used are the responsibility of the entity but should be set on the advice given by the actuary. A small change in the key assumptions (discount rate, inflation rate, salary increase and life expectancy) can have a significant impact on the estimated IAS 19 liability. In particular the discount and inflation rates, where our consulting actuary has indicated that a 0.1% change in these two assumptions would have approximately 2% effect on the liability. We have therefore concluded that there is a significant risk of material misstatement in the IAS 19 estimate due to the assumptions used in their calculation. With regard to these assumptions we have therefore identified valuation of the Authority's pension fund net liability as a significant risk.

We have:

- updated our understanding of the processes and controls put in place by management to ensure that the Council's pension fund net liability is not materially misstated and evaluated the design of the associated controls;
- evaluated the instructions issued by management to their management expert (an actuary) for this estimate and the scope of the actuary's work;
- assessed the competence, capabilities and objectivity of the actuary who carried out the Council's pension fund valuation;
- assessed the accuracy and completeness of the information provided by the Council to the actuary to estimate the liability;
- tested the consistency of the pension fund asset and liability and disclosures in the notes to the core financial statements with the actuarial report from the actuary;
- undertook procedures to confirm the reasonableness of the actuarial assumptions made by reviewing the report of the consulting actuary (as auditor's expert) and performing any additional procedures suggested within the report; and
- obtained assurances from the auditor of Oxfordshire Pension Fund as to the controls surrounding the validity and accuracy of membership data; contributions data and benefits data sent to the actuary by the pension fund and the fund assets valuation in the pension fund financial statements.

We have received the assurances from the auditor of Oxfordshire Pension Fund as to the controls surrounding the validity and accuracy of membership data; contributions data and benefits data sent to the actuary by the pension fund and the fund assets valuation in the pension fund financial statements. No material issues were raised.

The pension fund auditor raised that there had been an understatement of £12.4m on the assets of the fund as part of their audit. This was not considered material for the pension fund audit. We have evaluated the impact of this error on the share of the assets held by West Oxfordshire District Council and have concluded that this would have an impact of £292k, which is not material.

Our audit work has not identified any issues in respect of valuation of the pension fund liability.

2. Financial Statements – key judgements and estimates

This section provides commentary on key estimates and judgements inline with the enhanced requirements for auditors.

Significant judgement or estimate	Summary of management's approach	Audit Comments	Assessment
<p>Land and Building valuations – £61.2m</p>	<p>Other land and buildings comprises £61.2m of assets which are required to be valued at either current market value or depreciated replacement cost (DRC) at year end reflecting the cost of a modern equivalent asset necessary to deliver the same service provision.</p> <p>The Council used it's in house valuer to complete the valuation of properties as at 31 03 21 on a five yearly cyclical basis. 96% of total assets were revalued during 2020/21.</p> <p>For the remaining assets not formally revalued an exercise is undertaken to ensure that the carrying value is not materially different to the current value. Management applied indices to the values of those assets that have not been formally revalued in year to determine whether there has been a material change in the total value of these assets. Management's assessment of assets not revalued has identified no material change to the values.</p> <p>The total year end valuation of land and buildings was £61.2m, a net decrease of £1.3m from 2019/20</p>	<p>We have assessed the in house valuer to be competent, capable and objective.</p> <p>We have carried out completeness and accuracy testing of the underlying information provided to the valuer to determine the estimate and have no issues to report.</p> <p>We confirmed the valuation method remains consistent with the prior year and assessed the reasonableness of the estimates made by management in determining the movement of assets that have not been revalued in the current year.</p> <p>The accounts include some disclosure on the level of estimation uncertainty relating to PPE, however the current disclosures do not comply with the Code or the expectation of the FRC thematic review in this area. The disclosures should provide a greater level of detail on the nature of the assumptions used in making the estimates, and the sensitivity of that assumption with the associated impact on the carrying value within the accounts. Disclosures should provide readers with sufficient detail that they can share in management's understanding of the uncertainties underlying those estimates</p>	<p>Light purple</p>

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Assessment

- [Purple] We disagree with the estimation process or judgements that underpin the estimate and consider the estimate to be potentially materially misstated
- [Blue] We consider the estimate is unlikely to be materially misstated however management's estimation process contains assumptions we consider optimistic
- [Grey] We consider the estimate is unlikely to be materially misstated however management's estimation process contains assumptions we consider cautious
- [Light Purple] We consider management's process is appropriate and key assumptions are neither optimistic or cautious

2. Financial Statements – key judgements and estimates

This section provides commentary on key estimates and judgements inline with the enhanced requirements for auditors.

Significant judgement or estimate	Summary of management's approach	Audit Comments	Assessment
Investment Property valuations – £52m	<p>Investment properties comprises £52m of assets, which are required to be valued at fair value.</p> <p>The Council has used the internal valuer to complete the valuation of properties as at 31 march 2021. In line with the CIPFA Code, all investment properties were revalued during 2020/21.</p> <p>The total year end valuation of investment properties was £52m, a net decrease of £0.1m from 2019/20 (£52.1m).</p>	<p>We have assessed the in house valuer to be competent, capable and objective.</p> <p>We have carried out completeness and accuracy testing of the underlying information provided to the valuer to determine the estimate and have no issues to report.</p> <p>We confirmed the valuation method remains consistent with the prior year.</p> <p>We concur with the Council's categorisation of these assets as investment properties.</p>	Light purple

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Assessment

- [Purple] We disagree with the estimation process or judgements that underpin the estimate and consider the estimate to be potentially materially misstated
- [Blue] We consider the estimate is unlikely to be materially misstated however management's estimation process contains assumptions we consider optimistic
- [Grey] We consider the estimate is unlikely to be materially misstated however management's estimation process contains assumptions we consider cautious
- [Light Purple] We consider management's process is appropriate and key assumptions are neither optimistic or cautious

2. Financial Statements - key judgements and estimates

Significant judgement or estimate

Summary of management's approach

Audit Comments

Assessment

Net pension liability – £35m

The Council's total net pension liability at 31 March 2021 is £35m (PY £29.4m) comprising the Oxfordshire Local Government and unfunded defined benefit pension scheme obligations. The Council uses Hymans Robertson to provide actuarial valuations of the Council's assets and liabilities. A full actuarial valuation is required every three years.

The latest full actuarial valuation was completed in March 2019. Given the significant value of the net pension fund liability, small changes in assumptions can result in significant valuation movements. There has been a £5.6m increase in the liability during 2020/21.

We have carried out the following work in relation to this estimate;

- Assessed management's expert to ensure suitably qualified and independent;
- We have performed additional tests in relation to the actuary on contribution figures, benefits paid and investment returns to gain assurance over the 2020/21 roll forward calculation carried out by the actuary and have no issues to note.
- We have used PwC as auditors expert to assess actuary and assumptions made by actuary, the assumptions used by the actuary are in the range anticipated by our auditors expert.

Assumption	Actuary Value	PwC range	Assessment
Discount rate	2%	1.95% - 2.05%	●
Pension increase rate	2.85%	2.8%-2.85%	●
Salary growth	2.85%	2.5%-4.2%	●
Duration of liabilities	15-20 years	15-30 years	●

- We have reviewed the reasonableness Council's share of LPS pension assets and have no issues to raise.
- The accounts include the required disclosures on the level of estimation uncertainty relating to the pension fund net liability.

Light purple

Assessment

- **Dark Purple** We disagree with the estimation process or judgements that underpin the estimate and consider the estimate to be potentially materially misstated
- **Blue** We consider the estimate is unlikely to be materially misstated however management's estimation process contains assumptions we consider optimistic
- **Grey** We consider the estimate is unlikely to be materially misstated however management's estimation process contains assumptions we consider cautious
- **Light Purple** We consider management's process is appropriate and key assumptions are neither optimistic or cautious

2. Financial Statements - matters discussed with management

This section provides commentary on the significant matters we discussed with management during the course of the audit.

Significant matter	Commentary	Auditor view and management response
<p>Management have chosen to include a line on the face of the CIES called 'Called Covid 19 Income and Expenditure'.</p>	<p>The audit team challenged officers as to the appropriateness of inclusion of this line as a separate item on the face of the CIES, as this was out of line with many others in the sector, with other similar local authorities using the narrative report to explain the impact of Covid 19, rather than changing the presentation of a primary statement.</p> <p>Management viewed the income and expenditure as exceptional and have been reporting on this separately to officers and members, and as such they consider this to be a reportable segment.</p>	<p>As reportable segments are to be based on the authority's internal management reporting, the reporting of Covid income and expenditure separately on the face of the CIES is not unreasonable.</p> <p>We have however asked management to add some additional disclosures to the accounts to demonstrate their judgements in this area, and provide greater clarity on the change to the face of the CIES. This has been actioned in the updated version of the financial statements.</p> <p>Management response Income and expenditure in respect of the pandemic is deemed to be exceptional as it materially pertains to only one financial year, 2020/21. For this reason it has been disclosed separately on the face of the CIES. This is in line with internal management reporting and to aid the reader of the accounts. Whilst it is accepted that there will be some impact on the 2021/22 financial statements due to Covid, it will be to a much lesser degree and therefore the separating out of the Covid impact in the 2020/21 financial statements aids year on year comparison undistorted by unusual items. Additional disclosures to provide further clarity on the change to the presentation of the face of the CIES has been included within the narrative report in the updated version of the financial statements.</p>

2. Financial Statements - other communication requirements

We set out below details of other matters which we, as auditors, are required by auditing standards and the Code to communicate to those charged with governance.

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Issue	Commentary
Matters in relation to fraud	We have previously discussed the risk of fraud with the Audit and General Purposes Committee. We have not been made aware of any other incidents in the period and no other issues have been identified during the course of our audit procedures.
Matters in relation to related parties	Our audit work identified Wychwood project as a material related party transaction, as the Council's contribution relates to 7.5% of the charity's total income. This had been omitted from the original disclosure of related parties in the draft financial statements. We have requested that management amend for this transaction.
Matters in relation to laws and regulations	You have not made us aware of any significant incidences of non-compliance with relevant laws and regulations and we have not identified any incidences from our audit work.
Written representations	A letter of representation has been requested from the Council, which is appended.
Confirmation requests from third parties	We requested from management permission to send confirmation requests to all institutions where the Council holds cash or investment balances and those who lend the Council money. This permission was granted and the requests were sent. Of these requests all were returned with positive confirmation.
Accounting practices	We have evaluated the appropriateness of the Council's accounting policies, accounting estimates and financial statement disclosures. We have reported our findings in this area as part of appendix C.
Audit evidence and explanations/significant difficulties	All information and explanations requested from management was provided.

2. Financial Statements - other communication requirements



Our responsibility

As auditors, we are required to “obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence about the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern assumption in the preparation and presentation of the financial statements and to conclude whether there is a material uncertainty about the entity's ability to continue as a going concern” (ISA [UK] 570).

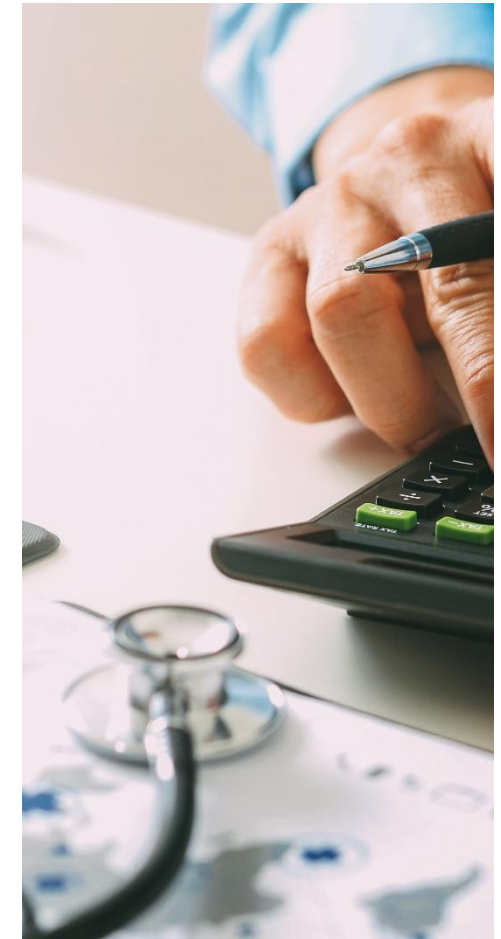
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Issue	Commentary
Going concern	<p>In performing our work on going concern, we have had reference to Statement of Recommended Practice – Practice Note 10: Audit of financial statements of public sector bodies in the United Kingdom (Revised 2020). The Financial Reporting Council recognises that for particular sectors, it may be necessary to clarify how auditing standards are applied to an entity in a manner that is relevant and provides useful information to the users of financial statements in that sector. Practice Note 10 provides that clarification for audits of public sector bodies.</p> <p>Practice Note 10 sets out the following key principles for the consideration of going concern for public sector entities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the use of the going concern basis of accounting is not a matter of significant focus of the auditor’s time and resources because the applicable financial reporting frameworks envisage that the going concern basis for accounting will apply where the entity’s services will continue to be delivered by the public sector. In such cases, a material uncertainty related to going concern is unlikely to exist, and so a straightforward and standardised approach for the consideration of going concern will often be appropriate for public sector entities for many public sector entities, the financial sustainability of the reporting entity and the services it provides is more likely to be of significant public interest than the application of the going concern basis of accounting. Our consideration of the Council's financial sustainability is addressed by our value for money work, which is covered elsewhere in this report. <p>Practice Note 10 states that if the financial reporting framework provides for the adoption of the going concern basis of accounting on the basis of the anticipated continuation of the provision of a service in the future, the auditor applies the continued provision of service approach set out in Practice Note 10. The financial reporting framework adopted by the Council meets this criteria, and so we have applied the continued provision of service approach. In doing so, we have considered and evaluated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the nature of the Council and the environment in which it operates the Council's financial reporting framework the Council's system of internal control for identifying events or conditions relevant to going concern management’s going concern assessment. <p>On the basis of this work, we have obtained sufficient appropriate audit evidence to enable us to conclude that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a material uncertainty related to going concern has not been identified management’s use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

2. Financial Statements - other responsibilities under the Code

Issue	Commentary
Other information	<p>We are required to give an opinion on whether the other information published together with the audited financial statements including the Annual Governance Statement and Narrative Report, is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated.</p> <p>No inconsistencies have been identified. We plan to issue an unmodified opinion in this respect – refer to Appendix E</p>
Matters on which we report by exception	<p>We are required to report on a number of matters by exception in a number of areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • if the Annual Governance Statement does not comply with disclosure requirements set out in CIPFA/SOLACE guidance or is misleading or inconsistent with the information of which we are aware from our audit, • if we have applied any of our statutory powers or duties. • where we are not satisfied in respect of arrangements to secure value for money and have reported [a] significant weakness/es. <p>We have nothing to report on these matters.</p>
Specified procedures for Whole of Government Accounts	<p>We are required to carry out specified procedures (on behalf of the NAO) on the Whole of Government Accounts (WGA) consolidation pack under WGA group audit instructions.</p> <p>Note that work is not required as the Council does not exceed the threshold</p>
Certification of the closure of the audit	<p>We intend to delay the certification of the closure of the 2020/21 audit of West Oxfordshire District Council in the audit report, as detailed in Appendix E, due to incomplete VFM work and the need to complete the assurance report in respect of WGA.</p>

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3. Value for Money arrangements

Revised approach to Value for Money work for 2020/21

On 1 April 2020, the National Audit Office introduced a new Code of Audit Practice which comes into effect from audit year 2020/21. The Code introduced a revised approach to the audit of Value for Money. (VFM)

There are three main changes arising from the NAO's new approach:

A new set of key criteria, covering financial sustainability, governance and improvements in economy, efficiency and effectiveness

More extensive reporting, with a requirement on the auditor to produce a commentary on arrangements across all of the key criteria.

- Auditors undertaking sufficient analysis on the Council's VFM arrangements to arrive at far more sophisticated judgements on performance, as well as key recommendations on any significant weaknesses in arrangements identified during the audit.

The Code require auditors to consider whether the body has put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. When reporting on these arrangements, the Code requires auditors to structure their commentary on arrangements under the three specified reporting criteria.



Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness

Arrangements for improving the way the body delivers its services. This includes arrangements for understanding costs and delivering efficiencies and improving outcomes for service users.



Financial Sustainability

Arrangements for ensuring the body can continue to deliver services. This includes planning resources to ensure adequate finances and maintain sustainable levels of spending over the medium term (3-5 years)



Governance

Arrangements for ensuring that the body makes appropriate decisions in the right way. This includes arrangements for budget setting and management, risk management, and ensuring the body makes decisions based on appropriate information

Potential types of recommendations

A range of different recommendations could be made following the completion of work on the body's arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources, which are as follows:



Statutory recommendation

Written recommendations to the body under Section 24 (Schedule 7) of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014. A recommendation under schedule 7 requires the body to discuss and respond publicly to the report.



Key recommendation

The Code of Audit Practice requires that where auditors identify significant weaknesses in arrangements to secure value for money they should make recommendations setting out the actions that should be taken by the body. We have defined these recommendations as 'key recommendations'.



Improvement recommendation

These recommendations, if implemented should improve the arrangements in place at the body, but are not made as a result of identifying significant weaknesses in the body's arrangements

3. VFM - our procedures and conclusions

We have not yet completed all of our VFM work and so are not in a position to issue our Auditor's Annual Report. An audit letter explaining the reasons for the delay is attached in the Appendix G to this report. We expect to issue our Auditor's Annual Report by 31 January 2022. This is in line with the National Audit Office's revised deadline, which requires the Auditor's Annual Report to be issued no more than three months after the date of the opinion on the financial statements.

As part of our work, we considered whether there were any risks of significant weakness in the Council's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. We identified the risk set out in the table below. Our work on this risk is underway and an update is set out below.

Risk of significant weakness

Work performed to date

Financial Sustainability

The Council is £900k behind the original budget at month 9, but ahead of the reforecast budget. All of the shortfall will be covered by grants. Whilst the Council has a healthy level of reserves and a strong history of delivering financial targets and savings, the financial challenge and uncertainty continues to increase. In setting the 2021/22 budget and Medium Financial Strategy for the next 4 years, the Council has identified the need to make a further £2.8m in savings/additional income. Due to the inherent uncertainty we have concluded that there is a significant risk of weakness in arrangements for delivering financial sustainability.

Work performed to date

- We have held a number of meetings with key officers of the Council, including the Chief Executive and s151 officer.
- We have reviewed budget reports presented to members of both the Cabinet and the Council.
- We have reviewed the going concern assessment provided by management in relation to the 2021/212 financial statements.

Further work is scheduled on understanding in detail how savings plans have been identified, and assessed for robustness.

4. Independence and ethics

Ethical Standards and ISA (UK) 260 require us to give you timely disclosure of all significant matters that may bear upon the integrity, objectivity and independence of the firm or covered persons relating to our independence.

In this context, we disclose to you that during the early part of the 2019/20 financial year, the previous audit manager, applied for a job with Publica. Following the application process, she was successful and has now take up her new role. The role involves completion of accounting transactions and the preparation of the financial statements for West Oxfordshire District Council. As a result this has required us to put certain safeguards in place to ensure that we can continue with the audit appointment and comply with the ethical standards as a firm.

The safeguard has been agreed by our ethics function and is such that the audit with effect from 2020/21 has been conducted with a new engagement lead from the South West Office, but then with the remainder of the audit team being sourced from our Midlands Public Sector Team.

We confirm that we have implemented policies and procedures to meet the requirements of the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standard and we as a firm, and each covered person, confirm that we are independent and are able to express an objective opinion on the financial statements.

Audit and non-audit services

For the purposes of our audit we have made enquiries of all Grant Thornton UK LLP teams providing services to the Council. No non-audit services were identified which were charged from the beginning of the financial year to date.

Further, we have complied with the requirements of the National Audit Office's Auditor Guidance Note 01 issued in May 2020 which sets out supplementary guidance on ethical requirements for auditors of local public bodies.

Details of fees charged are detailed in Appendix D

Transparency

Grant Thornton publishes an annual Transparency Report, which sets out details of the action we have taken over the past year to improve audit quality as well as the results of internal and external quality inspections. For more details see [Transparency report 2020 \(grantthornton.co.uk\)](https://www.grantthornton.co.uk/transparency-report-2020)

Appendices

A. Action plan – Audit of Financial Statements

We have identified two recommendations for the Council as a result of issues identified during the course of our audit. We have agreed our recommendations with management and we will report on progress on these recommendations during the course of the 2021/22 audit. The matters reported here are limited to those deficiencies that we have identified during the course of our audit and that we have concluded are of sufficient importance to merit being reported to you in accordance with auditing standards.

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Assessment	Issue and risk	Recommendations
Low	Disclosures relating to both critical judgements and estimation uncertainty lack the level of detail envisaged by IAS 540 and as described in the most recent FRC thematic review.	<p>Given the additional focus on accounting estimates, management should consider working more closely with experts to ensure more detailed disclosures can be provided in relation to both estimation uncertainty and critical judgements.</p> <p>Management response</p> <p>Disclosures relating to critical judgements and estimation uncertainty were expanded in 2020/21 but will be reviewed again as part of the 2021/22 closedown process to provide more detailed disclosures where appropriate.</p>
Medium	Our audit testing identified a number of assets recorded in the asset register at nil net book value. While this has no bottom line impact on the accounts, it does suggest that officers need to review the UEL and determine whether they remain appropriate for the assets that are still recorded in the asset register.	<p>Officers to review the assets held in the asset register at nil net book value.</p> <p>Management response</p> <p>Agreed. We will review the useful economic lives of equipment assets, particularly those close to being fully depreciated to assess whether the asset life and gross value remain appropriate. Given the amounts involved are not material this does not represent a significant risk to the accounts.</p>

Controls

- High – Significant effect on financial statements
- Medium – Limited Effect on financial statements
- Low – Best practice

B. Follow up of prior year recommendations

We identified the following issues in the audit of West Oxfordshire District Council's 2019/20 financial statements, which resulted in 2 recommendations being reported in our 2019/20 Audit Findings report. We are pleased to report that management have partially implemented all of our recommendations.

Assessment	Issue and risk previously communicated	Update on actions taken to address the issue
✓	It is clear that the Council has responded positively to the challenge presented by Covid-19 and are adequately monitoring and assessing the current and future impacts on the Council's finances, albeit it with an increased level of uncertainty. The financial years 20/21 and 21/22 will see perhaps the peak of the challenge with reduced levels of income, impact on savings, and uncertainty of funding. It is therefore business critical that officers and members take immediate action to identify further mitigations by way of reducing costs or increasing income. It is also crucial the medium-term financial plan is refreshed at the earliest opportunity	We are yet to fully complete our work on VFM for the current financial year, however, there is evidence that both officers and members understand the scale of the challenge and are actively working on managing the position and refreshing the medium-term financial plan.
In part	Our work identified a number of issues in relation to the valuation reports provided to the Council by the Internal Valuer.	<p>Our testing of the valuation report identified a number of differences to the valuations included in the asset register and statement of accounts. Investigations revealed that this was because the audit team had not been provided with the correct valuation report. The audit team undertook further checks to ensure the validity of the revised report to make sure that it was simply provided in error and was not indicative of any potential management override of controls. The audit team did not identify any evidence of management override of controls.</p> <p>Management need to ensure that the valuation report provided as part of the working papers agrees with the values used in the asset register and financial statements.</p> <p>Management response</p> <p>In the first instance an older version of the working paper that had not been fully updated was sent to the External Auditors in error. This was quickly corrected, and the Auditors were supplied with the latest version of the working paper.</p>

Assessment

- ✓ Action completed
- ✗ Not yet addressed

C. Audit Adjustments

We are required to report all non trivial misstatements to those charged with governance, whether or not the accounts have been adjusted by management.

Impact of adjusted misstatements

We have not identified any adjusted misstatements during the course of the audit.

Misclassification and disclosure changes

The table below provides details of misclassification and disclosure changes identified during the audit which have been made in the final set of financial statements.

Disclosure omission	Auditor recommendations	Adjusted?
The accounting policy in relation to accruals is missing the deminimus level applied by the Council.	Officers are to include the level used by the Council.	✓
The accounting policies contain some that are not material, for example, heritage assets and intangible assets.	Accounting policies relating to immaterial balances could be removed. Management response These accounting policies could potentially be removed but as the Council does hold assets of this type, even though not material, the policies will remain until a review is undertaken for the 2021/22 closedown process.	X
Note F8 – Assumptions and sources of estimation In terms of the estimates listed, the audit team are of the view that judgements around the debtors provision, housing benefits overpayments and business rate appeals are unlikely to have a material impact and therefore these judgements could be removed.	The audit team do not consider these to be material assumptions or sources of estimation uncertainty as per the Code, and these disclosures could be removed. Management response Agreed, judgements in respect of the debtors provision, housing benefits overpayments and business rate appeals are unlikely to have a material impact and have therefore been removed from the updated version of the financial statement.	✓
Note B9 – Grant Income The HB admin subsidy of £184k has been double counted in the note. It has been correctly included within the CIES.	Note B9 to be amended to ensure the HB admin subsidy is only included once.	✓

C. Audit Adjustments

We are required to report all non trivial misstatements to those charged with governance, whether or not the accounts have been adjusted by management.

Misclassification and disclosure changes (continued)

Disclosure omission	Auditor recommendations	Adjusted?
<p>Depreciation</p> <p>Our testing identified £304k of assets on the balance sheet that have been fully depreciated, but these have not been removed from the asset register. There is no impact on the balance sheet, however these assets are incorrectly recorded in the asset register and in the gross value.</p>	<p>We have included a recommendation for management to review these assets.</p> <p>Management response</p> <p>Agreed. We will review the useful economic lives of equipment assets, particularly those close to being fully depreciated to assess whether the asset life and gross value remain appropriate. Given the amounts involved are not material this does not represent a significant risk to the accounts.</p>	N/A
<p>Note B7 External Audit Costs</p> <p>The external audit services carried out by the appointed auditor line needs to be amended to £58,277.</p>	Note B7 to be amended.	✓
<p>The Movement in Reserves Statement (MiRS) and Note C2 – Usable Reserves</p> <p>The draft financial statements included an ‘unallocated’ General Fund Balance of £23.077m and Earmarked Reserves of ££8.828m. Following a Cabinet decision taken in July, members approved a transfer of £10.3m from the ‘unallocated’ General Fund Balance to the Earmarked Reserves. This has no impact on the total usable reserves of the Council, and is a reclassification.</p>	Officers have amended the draft financial statements for the £10.3m in both the MiRS and Note C2 as required.	✓

C. Audit Adjustments



Impact of unadjusted misstatements

The table below provides details of adjustments identified during the 2020/21 audit which have not been made within the final set of financial statements. The Audit and General Purposes Committee is required to approve management's proposed treatment of all items recorded within the table below.

Detail	Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement £'000	Statement of Financial Position £' 000	Impact on total net expenditure £'000	Reason for not adjusting
Non current investments held at amortised costs are understated by £77k. They are currently included in the balance sheet as £2,604k and they should be £2,681k	(77)	77		Management do not consider this to be material, and the audit team concur with this view.
Overall impact	(77)	77		

Impact of prior year unadjusted misstatements

The table below provides details of adjustments identified during the prior year audit which had not been made within the final set of 2019/20 financial statements

Detail	Detail	Reason for not adjusting
Fees, charges and other service income	Two amounts relating to 2018/19 have been recognised as income in 2019/20 with no debtor at 31 March 2019. The Council have sited that no accrual has been made due to the values, however this is above the de minimus level set by the Council for accruing. The errors were extrapolated to give a trivial total potential misstatement.	Management did not consider this to be material, and the audit team concurred with this view.
Creditors	A variance was identified between one sample item and the invoice evidence provided. This was because the invoice was originally posted in Publica with VAT incorrectly accounted for. This was corrected on the Publica side, but a credit note is due to the Council for the difference and had not been provided. The error was extrapolated to give a potential misstatement below performance materiality.	Management did not consider this to be material, and the audit team concurred with this view.

D. Fees

We confirm below our final fees charged for the audit and confirm there were no fees for the provision of non audit services.

Audit fees	Proposed fee	Final fee
Council Audit	£58,277	tbc
Total audit fees (excluding VAT)	£58,277	tbc

The fees reconcile to the financial statements.

- Total fees as per the revised note B7 £71,777
- This includes £13,500 payable to another audit firm for the provision of grant certification services
- This leaves a remaining balance of £58,277 which reconciles to the proposed fee.

E. Audit opinion

Our audit opinion is included below.

We anticipate we will provide the Council with an unmodified audit report

Independent auditor's report to the members of West Oxfordshire District Council

Report on the Audit of the Financial Statements

Opinion on financial statements

We have audited the financial statements of West Oxfordshire District Council (the 'Authority') for the year ended 31 March 2021, which comprise the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, Movement in Reserves Statement, the Balance Sheet, the Cashflow Statement, the Collection Fund and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and the CIPFA/LASAAC code of practice on local authority accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21.

In our opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the financial position of the Authority as at 31 March 2021 and of its expenditure and income for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the CIPFA/LASAAC code of practice on local authority accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law, as required by the Code of Audit Practice (2020) ("the Code of Audit Practice") approved by the Comptroller and Auditor General. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the 'Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements' section of our report. We are independent of the Authority in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

We are responsible for concluding on the appropriateness of the Chief Finance Officer's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Authority's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify the auditor's opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Authority to cease to continue as a going concern.

In our evaluation of the Chief Finance Officer's conclusions, and in accordance with the expectation set out within the CIPFA/LASAAC code of practice on local authority accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21 that the Authority's financial statements shall be prepared on a going concern basis, we considered the inherent risks associated with the continuation of services provided by the Authority. In doing so we had regard to the guidance provided in Practice Note 10 Audit of financial statements and regularity of public sector bodies in the United Kingdom (Revised 2020) on the application of ISA (UK) 570 Going Concern to public sector entities. We assessed the reasonableness of the basis of preparation used by the Authority and the Authority's disclosures over the going concern period.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the Authority's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the Chief Finance Officer's use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

The responsibilities of the Chief Finance Officer with respect to going concern are described in the 'Responsibilities of the Authority, the Chief Finance Officer and Those Charged with Governance for the financial statements' section of this report.

E. Audit opinion

Other information

The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the Statement of Accounts, other than the financial statements, and our auditor's report thereon. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of the other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Other information we are required to report on by exception under the Code of Audit Practice

Under the Code of Audit Practice published by the National Audit Office in April 2020 on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General (the Code of Audit Practice) we are required to consider whether the Annual Governance Statement does not comply with 'delivering good governance in Local Government Framework 2016 Edition' published by CIPFA and SOLACE or is misleading or inconsistent with the information of which we are aware from our audit. We are not required to consider whether the Annual Governance Statement addresses all risks and controls or that risks are satisfactorily addressed by internal controls.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinion on other matters required by the Code of Audit Practice

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit of the financial statements and our knowledge of the Authority, the other information published together with the financial statements in the Statement of Accounts for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

Under the Code of Audit Practice, we are required to report to you if:

- we issue a report in the public interest under section 24 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 in the course of, or at the conclusion of the audit; or
- we make a written recommendation to the Authority under section 24 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 in the course of, or at the conclusion of the audit; or
- we make an application to the court for a declaration that an item of account is contrary to law under Section 28 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 in the course of, or at the conclusion of the audit; or;
- we issue an advisory notice under Section 29 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 in the course of, or at the conclusion of the audit; or
- we make an application for judicial review under Section 31 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, in the course of, or at the conclusion of the audit.

We have nothing to report in respect of the above matters.

Responsibilities of the Authority, the Chief Finance Officer and Those Charged with Governance for the financial statements

As explained in the Statement of Responsibilities (set out on page 7), the Authority is required to make arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs and to secure that one of its officers has the responsibility for the administration of those affairs. In this authority, that officer is the Chief Finance Officer. The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for the preparation of the Statement of Accounts, which includes the financial statements, in accordance with proper practices as set out in the CIPFA/LASAAC code of practice on local authority accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21, for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Chief Finance Officer determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Chief Finance Officer is responsible for assessing the Authority's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless there is an intention by government that the services provided by the Authority will no longer be provided.

E. Audit opinion

The Audit and General Purposes Committee is Those Charged with Governance. Those Charged with Governance are responsible for overseeing the Authority's financial reporting process.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at:

www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Explanation as to what extent the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. Owing to the inherent limitations of an audit, there is an unavoidable risk that material misstatements in the financial statements may not be detected, even though the audit is properly planned and performed in accordance with the ISAs (UK).

The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below:

- We obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory frameworks that are applicable to the Authority and determined that the most significant, which are directly relevant to specific assertions in the financial statements, are those related to the reporting frameworks (international accounting standards as interpreted and adapted by the CIPFA/LASAAC code of practice on local authority accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21, The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 and the Local Government Act 2003, and the Local Government Finance Act 1988 (as amended by the Local Government Finance Act 1992) and the Local Government Finance Act 2012.

- We enquired of senior officers and the Audit and General Purposes Committee concerning the Authority's policies and procedures relating to:
 - the identification, evaluation and compliance with laws and regulations;
 - the detection and response to the risks of fraud; and
 - the establishment of internal controls to mitigate risks related to fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations.
- We enquired of senior officers, internal audit and the Audit and General Purposes Committee, whether they were aware of any instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations or whether they had any knowledge of actual, suspected or alleged fraud.
- We assessed the susceptibility of the Authority's financial statements to material misstatement, including how fraud might occur, by evaluating officers' incentives and opportunities for manipulation of the financial statements. This included the evaluation of the risk of management override of controls. We determined that the principal risks were in relation to:
 - Journals processed by senior finance officers, as we would not expect them to be involved in the normal day to day operations of the general ledger
 - Journals with a blank description, as this could indicate that there is not a legitimate reason for posting a journal.
- Our audit procedures involved:
 - evaluation of the design effectiveness of controls that the Chief Finance Officer has in place to prevent and detect fraud;
 - journal entry testing, with a focus on any journals posted by senior finance officers and those with a blank description;
 - challenging assumptions and judgements made by management in its significant accounting estimates in respect of land and buildings, investment property and defined benefit pensions liability valuations;
 - assessing the extent of compliance with the relevant laws and regulations as part of our procedures on the related financial statement item.

E. Audit opinion

- These audit procedures were designed to provide reasonable assurance that the financial statements were free from fraud or error. However, detecting irregularities that result from fraud is inherently more difficult than detecting those that result from error, as those irregularities that result from fraud may involve collusion, deliberate concealment, forgery or intentional misrepresentations. Also, the further removed non-compliance with laws and regulations is from events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, the less likely we would become aware of it.
- The team communications in respect of potential non-compliance with relevant laws and regulations, including the potential for fraud in revenue and expenditure recognition, and the significant accounting estimates related to land and buildings, investment property and defined benefit pensions liability valuations.
- Assessment of the appropriateness of the collective competence and capabilities of the engagement team included consideration of the engagement team's.
 - understanding of, and practical experience with audit engagements of a similar nature and complexity through appropriate training and participation
 - knowledge of the local government sector
 - understanding of the legal and regulatory requirements specific to the Authority including:
 - the provisions of the applicable legislation
 - guidance issued by CIPFA/LASAAC and SOLACE
 - the applicable statutory provisions.
- In assessing the potential risks of material misstatement, we obtained an understanding of:
 - the Authority's operations, including the nature of its income and expenditure and its services and of its objectives and strategies to understand the classes of transactions, account balances, expected financial statement disclosures and business risks that may result in risks of material misstatement.
 - the Authority's control environment, including the policies and procedures implemented by the Authority to ensure compliance with the requirements of the financial reporting framework.

Report on other legal and regulatory requirements – the Authority's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources

Matter on which we are required to report by exception – the Authority's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources

Under the Code of Audit Practice, we are required to report to you if, in our opinion, we have not been able to satisfy ourselves that the Authority has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ended 31 March 2021.

Our work on the Authority's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources is not yet complete. The outcome of our work will be reported in our commentary on the Authority's arrangements in our Auditor's Annual Report. If we identify any significant weaknesses in these arrangements, these will be reported by exception in a further auditor's report. We are satisfied that this work does not have a material effect on our opinion on the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2021.

Responsibilities of the Authority

The Authority is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources, to ensure proper stewardship and governance, and to review regularly the adequacy and effectiveness of these arrangements.

Auditor's responsibilities for the review of the Authority's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources

We are required under Section 20(1)(c) of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 to be satisfied that the Authority has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. We are not required to consider, nor have we considered, whether all aspects of the Authority's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources are operating effectively.

E. Audit opinion

We undertake our review in accordance with the Code of Audit Practice, having regard to the guidance issued by the Comptroller and Auditor General in April 2021. This guidance sets out the arrangements that fall within the scope of ‘proper arrangements’. When reporting on these arrangements, the Code of Audit Practice requires auditors to structure their commentary on arrangements under three specified reporting criteria:

- Financial sustainability: how the Authority plans and manages its resources to ensure it can continue to deliver its services;
- Governance: how the Authority ensures that it makes informed decisions and properly manages its risks; and
- Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness: how the Authority uses information about its costs and performance to improve the way it manages and delivers its services.

We document our understanding of the arrangements the Authority has in place for each of these three specified reporting criteria, gathering sufficient evidence to support our risk assessment and commentary in our Auditor’s Annual Report. In undertaking our work, we consider whether there is evidence to suggest that there are significant weaknesses in arrangements.

Report on other legal and regulatory requirements – Delay in certification of completion of the audit

We cannot formally conclude the audit and issue an audit certificate for West Oxfordshire District Council for the year ended 31 March 2021 in accordance with the requirements of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the Code of Audit Practice until we have completed:

- our work on the Authority’s arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources and issued our Auditor’s Annual Report’
- the work necessary to issue our Whole of Government Accounts (WGA) Component Assurance statement for the Authority for the year ended 31 March 2021.

We are satisfied that this work does not have a material effect on the financial statements.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the members of the Authority, as a body, in accordance with Part 5 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and as set out in paragraph 43 of the Statement of Responsibilities of Auditors and Audited Bodies published by Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the Authority’s members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor’s report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Authority and the Authority’s members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Signature:

Peter Barber, Key Audit Partner

for and on behalf of Grant Thornton UK LLP, Local Auditor

Birmingham

Date: xx November 2021

F. Management Letter of Representation

[LETTER TO BE WRITTEN ON CLIENT HEADED PAPER]

Grant Thornton UK LLP

[Date] – {TO BE DATED SAME DATE AS DATE OF AUDIT OPINION}

Dear Sirs

West Oxfordshire District Council Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2021

This representation letter is provided in connection with the audit of the financial statements of West Oxfordshire District Council for the year ended 31 March 2021 for the purpose of expressing an opinion as to whether Council financial statements are presented fairly, in all material respects in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards and the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21 and applicable law.

We confirm that to the best of our knowledge and belief having made such inquiries as we considered necessary for the purpose of appropriately informing ourselves:

Financial Statements

- i. We have fulfilled our responsibilities for the preparation of the Council's financial statements in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards and the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21 ("the Code"); in particular the financial statements are fairly presented in accordance therewith.
- ii. We have complied with the requirements of all statutory directions affecting the Council and these matters have been appropriately reflected and disclosed in the financial statements.
- iii. The Council has complied with all aspects of contractual agreements that could have a material effect on the financial statements in the event of non-compliance. There has been no non-compliance with requirements of any regulatory authorities that could have a material effect on the financial statements in the event of non-compliance.
- iv. We acknowledge our responsibility for the design, implementation and maintenance of internal control to prevent and detect fraud.

- v. Significant assumptions used by us in making accounting estimates, including those measured at fair value, are reasonable. Such accounting estimates include PPE valuations, the valuation of the pension fund liability and the measurement of financial instruments. We are satisfied that the material judgements used in the preparation of the financial statements are soundly based, in accordance with the Code and adequately disclosed in the financial statements. We understand our responsibilities includes identifying and considering alternative, methods, assumptions or source data that would be equally valid under the financial reporting framework, and why these alternatives were rejected in favour of the estimate used. We are satisfied that the methods, the data and the significant assumptions used by us in making accounting estimates and their related disclosures are appropriate to achieve recognition, measurement or disclosure that is reasonable in accordance with the Code and adequately disclosed in the financial statements.
- vi. We confirm that we are satisfied that the actuarial assumptions underlying the valuation of pension scheme assets and liabilities for IAS19 Employee Benefits disclosures are consistent with our knowledge. We confirm that all settlements and curtailments have been identified and properly accounted for. We also confirm that all significant post-employment benefits have been identified and properly accounted for.
- vii. Except as disclosed in the financial statements:
 - vi. there are no unrecorded liabilities, actual or contingent
 - vii. none of the assets of the Council has been assigned, pledged or mortgaged
 - viii. there are no material prior year charges or credits, nor exceptional or non-recurring items requiring separate disclosure.
- viii. Related party relationships and transactions have been appropriately accounted for and disclosed in accordance with the requirements of International Financial Reporting Standards and the Code.
- ix. All events subsequent to the date of the financial statements and for which International Financial Reporting Standards and the Code require adjustment or disclosure have been adjusted or disclosed.

F. Management Letter of Representation

- x. We have considered the adjusted misstatements, and misclassification and disclosures changes schedules included in your Audit Findings Report. The Council's financial statements have been amended for these misstatements, misclassifications and disclosure changes and are free of material misstatements, including omissions.
- xi. We have considered the unadjusted misstatements schedule included in your Audit Findings Report and attached. We have not adjusted the financial statements for these misstatements brought to our attention as they are immaterial to the results of the Council. The financial statements are free of material misstatements, including omissions.
- xii. Actual or possible litigation and claims have been accounted for and disclosed in accordance with the requirements of International Financial Reporting Standards.
- xiii. We have no plans or intentions that may materially alter the carrying value or classification of assets and liabilities reflected in the financial statements.
- xiv. We have updated our going concern assessment and cashflow forecasts in light of the Covid-19 pandemic. We continue to believe that Council's financial statements should be prepared on a going concern basis and have not identified any material uncertainties related to going concern on the grounds that :
- a. the nature of the Council means that, notwithstanding any intention to liquidate the group and Council or cease its operations in their current form, it will continue to be appropriate to adopt the going concern basis of accounting because, in such an event, services it performs can be expected to continue to be delivered by related public authorities and preparing the financial statements on a going concern basis will still provide a faithful representation of the items in the financial statements
 - b. the financial reporting framework permits the entry to prepare its financial statements on the basis of the presumption set out under a) above; and
 - c. The Council's system of internal control has not identified any events or conditions relevant to going concern.

We believe that no further disclosures relating to the Council's ability to continue as a going concern need to be made in the financial statements.

Information Provided

- xiv. We have provided you with:
- a. access to all information of which we are aware that is relevant to the preparation of the Council's financial statements such as records, documentation and other matters;
 - b. additional information that you have requested from us for the purpose of your audit; and
 - c. access to persons within the Council via remote arrangements, in compliance with the nationally specified social distancing requirements established by the government in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. from whom you determined it necessary to obtain audit evidence.
- xvi. We have communicated to you all deficiencies in internal control of which management is aware.
- xvii. All transactions have been recorded in the accounting records and are reflected in the financial statements.
- xviii. We have disclosed to you the results of our assessment of the risk that the financial statements may be materially misstated as a result of fraud.
- xix. We have disclosed to you all information in relation to fraud or suspected fraud that we are aware of and that affects the Council, and involves:
- a. management;
 - b. employees who have significant roles in internal control; or
 - c. others where the fraud could have a material effect on the financial statements.
- xx. We have disclosed to you all information in relation to allegations of fraud, or suspected fraud, affecting the financial statements communicated by employees, former employees, analysts, regulators or others.

F. Management Letter of Representation

- xxi. We have disclosed to you all known instances of non-compliance or suspected non-compliance with laws and regulations whose effects should be considered when preparing financial statements.
- xxii. We have disclosed to you the identity of the Council's related parties and all the related party relationships and transactions of which we are aware.
- xxiii. We have disclosed to you all known actual or possible litigation and claims whose effects should be considered when preparing the financial statements.

Annual Governance Statement

- xxiv. We are satisfied that the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) fairly reflects the Council's risk assurance and governance framework and we confirm that we are not aware of any significant risks that are not disclosed within the AGS.

Narrative Report

- xxv. The disclosures within the Narrative Report fairly reflect our understanding of the group and Council's financial and operating performance over the period covered by the financial statements.

Approval

The approval of this letter of representation was minuted by the Council's Audit and General Purposes Committee at its meeting on 24 November 2021.

Yours faithfully

Name.....

Position.....

Date.....

Signed on behalf of the Council

G. Audit letter in respect of delayed VFM work

Note that this letter does not form part of our formal communications under ISA 260 (Communication with Those Charged with Governance) but is included here for ease of reference.

Alex Postan,
Audit and General Purposes Committee Chair
West Oxfordshire District Council
3 Welch Way
Witney
Oxfordshire
OX28 6JH

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Dear Alex

Under the 2020 Code of Audit Practice, for relevant authorities other than local NHS bodies we are required to issue our Auditor's Annual Report no later than 30 September or, where this is not possible, issue an audit letter setting out the reasons for delay.

As a result of the ongoing pandemic, and the impact it has had on both preparers and auditors of accounts to complete their work as quickly as would normally be expected, the National Audit Office has updated its guidance to auditors to allow us to postpone completion of our work on arrangements to secure value for money and focus our resources firstly on the delivery of our opinions on the financial statements. This is intended to help ensure as many as possible could be issued in line with national timetables and legislation.

As a result, we have therefore not yet issued our Auditor's Annual Report, including our commentary on arrangements to secure value for money. We now expect to publish our report no later than 28 February 2022.

For the purposes of compliance with the 2020 Code, this letter constitutes the required audit letter explaining the reasons for delay.

Yours faithfully

Peter Barber

Director and Key Audit Partner
for and on behalf of Grant Thornton UK LLP, Local Auditor

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WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2020/21

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NARRATIVE REPORT

West Oxfordshire District Council

West Oxfordshire District Council combines beautiful countryside with a thriving local economy and enviable visitor attractions. The District has high job growth and, despite an expanding population, rates of unemployment and crime are among the lowest in the Country.

The population is approximately 109,800; the three largest towns are Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton, though the majority of the population (57%) live in rural areas. The District also has an ageing population and estimates from 2017-2027 show the 65 years and over age group increasing by a further 6,147 people with two-thirds of this being outside the main towns.

The Council Plan 2020-2024 was updated in January 2020 and sets out the Council's key priorities and shows how the Council intends to achieve its ambitions for supporting local communities and the delivery of local services as follows:

Our Vision and Priorities

Our vision is to support West Oxfordshire to be fit for the future through:

- Climate action
- Healthy towns and villages
- A vibrant district economy
- Strong local communities
- Meeting the housing needs of our changing population
- Modern council services and sustainable finance

Under each priority are the 'key actions' which show what the Council plan to do to achieve each priority and objective. Service Delivery Plans are in place for Council services; and include a summary of what the service does, and how it supports the Council's aim, priorities and objectives. They link the priorities and objectives in the Council Plan to the activities that demonstrate what the Council will do to achieve them.

During the year, the Council monitors the progress of the Council Plan and activities and performance measures in the Service Delivery Plans to ensure that the Council stays on track, and achieves what it set out to do.

The Covid-19 pandemic significantly impacted the 2020/21 financial year and the Council anticipates that

there will be further substantial challenges in the year ahead as it deals with the post Covid recovery.

Publica Group (Support) Limited

Publica Group (Support) Limited ['Publica'] is wholly owned by West Oxfordshire District Council along with Cotswold District Council, Forest of Dean District Council and Cheltenham Borough Council. It is a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee with no share capital and operates with Mutual Trading Status to deliver services on behalf of the Member councils under contract.

Publica is a Teckal company fulfilling the conditions set out in Regulation 12(4) of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. The Company is subject to management supervision by the Members. As such, the Company is a body governed by public law as defined in the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

While Publica works closely with the Council, the company has its own board of Directors, its own Management team, and operates independently from the Council.

Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)

The financial impact of the new Council priorities has been reflected in the update to the Medium Term Financial Strategy during 2020/21. The Council operates a rolling 10 year MTFS, the latest being approved by Cabinet on 17 February 2021. This latest update reflected:

- The end of New Homes Bonus
- The loss of £4m of funding through the Business Rates Reset due in 2022/23
- The erosion of General Fund balances
- The rising reliance on borrowing over the span of the MFTS to replace internal borrowing (borrowing from our own cash reserves) and fund the Council's investment strategy
- A provision of £3.5m for appeals against both the 2010 and 2017 Business Rate rating list.
- Changes in assumptions on tax base growth and inflation
- £5.1m Return on Investment from the Council's Investment Strategy

The Medium Term Financial Strategy will be revised twice a year in light of Covid-19 recovery, the reduction in funding and the increased consumption of General Fund balances to ensure the Council remains financially operable for the duration of the current MTFS.

The latest version of the Medium Term Financial Strategy can be found on the Council's website within the documents of the Cabinet meeting of 17 February 2021.

NARRATIVE REPORT

Financial Performance

The Council's 2020/21 budget strategy assumed a balanced budget with a contribution from General Fund of £1,395. The outturn position (after transfers to earmarked reserves) was a surplus for the year of £48,753

The full Q4 outturn report can be viewed visiting the Council website and reading the Cabinet papers of 21st July 2021.

Covid 19 Support Grants

The Council received a range of grants from Central Government in 2020/21 in response to the Covid pandemic, These included funding to support the Council's cost of services or to offset income losses. They also funded grant packages to be paid out to support local businesses.

	Council as Agent	Council as Principal
Grant Funding as at 31st March	£	£
Small Busines Grants Fund/Retail, Leisure, Hospitality	(26,785,000)	0
Local Authority Discretionary Fund	0	(1,286,708)
Local Restrictions Closed	(2,798,136)	0
Local Restrictions Closed Addendum 5th Jan-15th Feb	(3,042,738)	0
Local Restrictions Closed Addendum 16th Feb-31st March	(3,187,630)	0
Closed Business Lockdown One Off Payment	(6,084,000)	0
Christmas Support Payments Wet Led Pubs	(76,800)	0
Local Restrictions Open	0	(584,555)
ARG	0	(3,195,708)
	(41,974,304)	(5,066,971)
Distributed as at 31st March 2021	36,266,938	3,304,204
Remainder	(5,707,366)	(1,762,767)

Where the Council is merely administering grants on behalf of Central Government to local businesses we are acting as an agent and therefore these transactions are not included in our financial statements. At the year end £5,707,366 remained unspent for such schemes which sits as a Creditor on our Balance Sheet (note D5). Once all rounds of Local Restrictions payments are closed there will be a reconciliation and any funds remaining will be returned to Central Government.

Where the Council is acting as a principal in the administration of grants i.e. the Council has control and sets the eligibility criteria for the grant to be paid out, these transactions are recognised in our financial statements. At the year end £1,762,767 of funding for such schemes is yet to be spent and this is available for use in 2021/22.

Classification of Covid-19 income and expenditure

The Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement identifies separately income and expenditure in relation to both Covid Business Grants (Revenues – Covid Business Grants) and costs, as service specific grants/contributions directly attributable to the Covid-19 pandemic.

General Government Grants including the Covid-19 LA Support Grant and Sales, Fees and Charges Compensation Grant are disclosed within 'Taxation and Non Specific Grant Income', as disclosed within note B9.

Retained Business Rates

There is a £7.15m deficit in our retained Business Rate income for 2020/21 due to the extension of government reliefs to the Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Sectors. The corresponding Section 31 compensation grant we received in the year from the Government has been moved to Earmarked Reserves to fund the repayment of the deficit on the Collection Fund in 2021/22. This deficit has been taken account of when setting the 2021/22 budget.

Capital Programme

The Council maintains a capital programme to support investment and manage its assets. The approved budget for the year was £20.6m.

In 2020/21 the Council spent £13.376m on:

Capital Investment in the year	£000
Cottsway Housing Association Loan	5,914
Southill Solar Loan	2,000
Cottsway Blenheim Court Growth Deal	1,534
Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs)	785
Cottsway Lavender Place Growth Deal	891
Deployment of High Speed Broadband	829
S106 Funded Projects	518
Community Grants Funded Projects	175
IT Equipment and Infrastructure	149
Talisman Roof Repairs	134
Flood Prevention	131
Parish Loans	80
Ubico Fleet Replacement	75
Other Minor Schemes	161
	13,376

NARRATIVE REPORT

The most significant of these was additional loans to Cottsway Housing to facilitate the provision of affordable housing in the District. In addition the Council loaned a further £2m to Southill Solar in line with the Council’s stated priority to take action locally on climate change.

The capital spend for the year was £13.3m against a budget of £20.6m.

Financial Position

Net Assets decreased in the year by approximately £5.5m, however, The Council continues to maintain a strong Balance Sheet despite financial challenges.



Net Assets 19/20
£118.447m
Net Assets 20/21
£112.923m
<hr/>
Movement
£5.524m

The major contributing factors to the reduction were an increase in the pension fund obligation of £5.58m.

Pension Liability

West Oxfordshire District Council is a member of the Oxfordshire County Council Pension Fund, for which Oxfordshire County Council is the administering authority. The scheme is a defined benefit statutory scheme that is administered in accordance with the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 1997 (as amended).

At the balance sheet date the actuarial valuation had the pension fund in deficit (liabilities exceed assets). The valuation is represented as follows:

Pension assets and liabilities	£000
Fair value of employer assets	68,916
Present value of obligations	(103,919)
Surplus / (deficit) on the pension fund	(35,003)

Despite the Council’s share of Pension Fund assets rising by £16.6m, the net liability has increased by £5.5m. This is due to a significant increase in the pension fund liabilities of £22.2m. The future value of pension liabilities is based on the discount rate, which is based on the yield on investment grade corporate bonds. As the spread on corporate bonds has reduced, it has led to a decrease in the discount rate,

which in turn has a negative effect on pension scheme liabilities.

The 31st March 2021 position [£35,003,000 deficit] is compared to a deficit at 31st March 2020 of £29,421,000. Whilst the scheme is in deficit it represents the net value of what the Council owes across all future years. Publica and the Council are making contributions to cover liabilities accruing for employees that are current members and a lump-sum payment of £3.62m was made in 2020/21 to fund the deficit.

Operational Performance and Efficiency

The Council has three Overview and Scrutiny Committees – Finance and Management; Economic and Social; and Environment – to monitor the Council’s progress towards achieving its aims and priorities as set out in the Corporate Strategy and Plan.

Some indicators such as Leisure Centre attendance, have been affected by Covid, while others such as abandoned calls are being driven by messaging encouraging people to turn to the website, so a higher incidence is not necessarily a negative outcome. On this basis, the current suite of indicators is being reviewed.

For more details on the year’s performance please refer to the Council website and the ‘Financial and Service Performance Report 2020/2021 Year End’ report from 16th June 2021.

Risk Management

The Corporate Risk Register was updated during 2020/21 and reviewed by the Senior Management Team which comprises both Council and Publica Senior Managers. Any risk scoring 15 or above is considered a ‘primary’ risk.

At the end of 2020/21, there were 2 primary risks on the register:

- If the Council does not deliver a balanced medium term financial strategy then it may need to cut services or make additional savings. The MTFS approved in February 2021 shows a steady decline in the Council’s reserves caused by the loss of government funding and the expected Business Rates Reset. The situation is under constant review.
- The 2021/22 budget and the MTFS have been set taking into account the continued pressure on the Council’s income and expenditure due to Covid. The pressure on reserves is exacerbated by the impact of the Covid recovery period.

Explanation of the Accounting Statements

The Statement of Accounts sets out the Council's income and expenditure for the year, and its financial position at 31 March. It comprises core and supplementary statements, together with supporting notes. The format and content of the financial statements is prescribed by the CIPFA Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom, which in turn is underpinned by International Financial Reporting Standards. A glossary of key terms and abbreviations can be found at the end of this publication.

The **Annual Governance Statement** which sets out the governance structures of the Council and its key internal controls.

The **Core Statements** are:

The **Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement** – this records all of the Council's income and expenditure for the year. The top half of the statement provides an analysis by service area / directorate. The bottom half of the statement deals with corporate transactions and funding.

The **Movement in Reserves Statement** is a summary of the changes that have taken place in the bottom-half of the Balance Sheet over the financial year.

Reserves are divided into "usable", which can be invested in service improvements or capital investment, and "unusable" which must be set aside for specific purposes.

The **Balance Sheet** is a 'snapshot' of the Council's assets, liabilities, cash balances and reserves as at the year-end, 31 March 2020.

The **Cash Flow Statement** shows the reason for changes in the Council's cash balances during the year, and whether that change is due to operating activities, new investment or financing activities (such as borrowing or other long term liabilities).

The **Supplementary Statements** are:

The **Collection Fund** summarises the transactions relating to council tax and business rates collection, and the redistribution of that money.

Business Rates is distributed to Central Government, Oxfordshire County Council and West Oxfordshire District Council. Council Tax is distributed between Oxfordshire County Council, the Police & Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley, West Oxfordshire District Council and the Town & Parish Councils within the West Oxfordshire district.

Facing the Challenges Ahead

In a similar vein to 2020/21, the Council's financial position for the coming budget year (2021/22) has improved significantly due to the delay in the implementation of the changes to local government funding. We anticipated both the reset of business rates and the loss of New Homes Bonus. Both of these things have been deferred, although the expectation is that the deferral is a one year gift and the sharp drop off in funding that these will cause has been forecast in the MTFs to take effect from 2022/23, causing an overall funding loss of £4m and a consequential budget gap of £2.8m.

In the middle of the 2020/21 financial year, West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC) undertook an extensive financial review. In recognition of the longer term funding issues highlighted in the MTFs, any savings that could be made without loss of service, no matter how small, were made. The overall impact was a reduction in overhead budget of circa £300k. This still represents only a 2% reduction in our net revenue budget but shows the extent to which any and all efficiency savings have been made.

In addition to the government funded grants paid out to local businesses, the Council agreed a package of support to help local communities and businesses recover from the pandemic. The funding for this has been ring fenced in ear marked reserves to ensure that the two year programme, that is already underway, remains deliverable.

While expenditure can, for the most part, be monitored closely and controlled carefully, the larger risk in our budget not only this year but in coming years is income and government funding. The issue around government funding has been discussed above. The issue of income is a difficult one in the context of the current pandemic. The Council relies on almost £1.5m per annum of income from its leisure centres and £3.4m in commercial income. Both of these areas have been impacted by the pandemic and the long term effects are still unclear.

For the leisure centres, an agreement was reached with GLL, our leisure operator to provide support to them through 2020/21. This agreement capped our exposure in that financial year with the expectation that by spring 2021, things would be returning to some semblance of normality.

The local team at GLL have been incredibly good at managing through the restrictions and minimising losses – and indeed, proved towards the end of last year that the centres can break even under tier three restrictions. We are in the process of agreeing a new support deal for 2021/22 but the hope is that from the end of the new financial year, if not sooner, the situation will return to normal, including the return of the management fees which are such a crucial element of the Council's budget. The additional risk to the leisure operations is in the changing attitudes of customers to leisure provision in a time when many have found alternative ways to exercise and have faced long periods of uncertainty around access to facilities, and the appearance of competitors entering the market with tailored offerings.

Commercial income has been affected by successive lockdowns with many businesses struggling. Each tenant has had an individual discussion with our Commercial Property team and, where appropriate, agreements have been made to defer or adjust rental payments. The budget has been set on the basis of these actual agreements and therefore is a realistic current assessment of our income expectations but in the context of the current pandemic, this situation could change.

The year-end position includes an increased provision for impairment. This is a reflection of the ongoing impact of the Covid pandemic on the businesses of our customers.

It's as yet unclear what impact the UK's exit from the European Union will have on our finances. So far there appears to be a minimal direct impact but there could be a knock on effect as it impacts local businesses and residents. One of our recognised risks was that investments that lost capital value during the first lockdown and have been recovering subsequently, took further losses that prove irrecoverable. These have now significantly recovered and we are confident this will continue but are monitoring carefully nonetheless.

Provision of £3.5m has been made for business rates appeals. This provision has been calculated on the same basis as in previous years but it is an estimated provision and the risk exists that it is either overly prudent or inadequate.

NARRATIVE REPORT

2020/21 and indeed, 2021/22 are periods of unprecedented uncertainty. The expectations we had for the resolution of the pandemic last year have been proven wrong so there cannot be absolute certainty that our current expectations are correct. We are clearly dealing with a situation that is beyond our control.

We are in a good position to deal with unexpected budgetary impacts in the short term as we have a strong level of reserves but in the context of the longer term pressures on the MTFS, we will, and must, continue to be cautious around any additional spending whilst progressing the investment strategy designed to generate future income and help to reduce the budget gap caused by the reduction of Government funding.

While our reserves are adequate, they are not infinite, and even the current plans, which have had significant savings and income generation factored into them, will see those reserves eroded in the medium term. Much care must be taken to ensure that the investment strategy is realised, to regularly reforecast our long term position and to resist any unnecessary spend, especially that incurring additional long term debt.

WODC finds itself in a position that is more fortunate than many councils. Through careful management in the past it has built up a good level of reserves but these are forecast to be depleted significantly in the medium term and the protection of them lies partly in the savings we have already made but also government funding yet to be determined and future commercial strategies yet to be realised.

Much care must be taken not to reduce potential income or increase projected spend. The MTFS will be reforecast at least twice a year and if the rate of reserve reduction increases, action must be taken swiftly to protect our long term sustainability.

Elizabeth Griffiths ACMA
Chief Finance Officer

Further information

For further information on the accounts please contact:

Elizabeth Griffiths, Chief Finance Officer,
West Oxfordshire District Council,
Woodgreen, Witney, Oxfordshire OX28 1NB;

or via email at Elizabeth.Griffiths@westoxon.gov.uk

The Authority's responsibilities

The Authority is required to:

- Make arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs and to secure that one of its officers has the responsibility for the administration of those affairs. In this Authority, that officer is the Chief Finance Officer.
- Manage its affairs to secure economic, efficient and effective use of resources and safeguard its assets.
- Approve the Statement of Accounts.

The Chief Finance Officer's responsibility

The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for the preparation of the Authority's Statement of Accounts in accordance with proper practices as set out in the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom (the Code).

In preparing this statement of accounts, the Chief Finance Officer has:

- Selected suitable accounting policies and then applied them consistently;
- Made judgements and estimates that were reasonable and prudent;
- Complied with the Local Authority Code.

The Chief Finance Officer has also:

- Kept proper accounting records which were up to date;
- Taken reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

CERTIFICATE

I certify that the Statement of Accounts presented here gives a true and fair view of the financial position of the authority at the accounting date and of its income and expenditure for the year ended 31st March 2021.

Elizabeth Griffiths
Chief Finance Officer and Deputy Chief Executive

Date: _____

In accordance with regulation 10(3) Accounts and Audit Regulations 2016, the statement of accounts is approved by the Chair of the Audit and General Purposes Committee, on behalf of West Oxfordshire District Council.

Cllr Alex Postan
Chairman of the Audit and General Purposes Committee

Date: _____

COMPREHENSIVE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT

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2019/2020					2020/2021		
Gross Expenditure £	Gross Income £	Net Expenditure £		Note	Gross Expenditure £	Gross Income £	Net Expenditure £
			<u>Joint Committee</u>				
1,341,705	(639,242)	702,463	Environmental and Regulatory Services		1,328,290	(570,974)	757,316
1,021,570	(24,055)	997,515	Finance, Human Resources & Procurement		1,000,437	(22,850)	977,587
3,642,835	(1,679,575)	1,963,260	ICT, Change and Customer Services		2,737,120	(836,802)	1,900,318
1,753,537	(853,694)	899,843	Land, Legal and Property Services		1,748,508	(835,337)	913,171
280,781	(10,957)	269,824	Partnership MD and 2020 Programme Costs		0	0	0
19,368,574	(19,126,346)	242,228	Revenues and Housing Support Services		21,047,554	(19,632,558)	1,414,996
			<u>Strategic Directors</u>				
1,367,993	(323,874)	1,044,119	Democratic Services		962,196	(25,615)	936,581
10,339,969	(3,563,141)	6,776,828	Environmental Services		10,055,875	(3,547,243)	6,508,632
3,659,230	(2,133,900)	1,525,330	Leisure and Communities Services		3,875,355	(829,555)	3,045,800
2,578,555	(1,425,310)	1,153,245	Planning and Strategic Housing Services		4,861,860	(2,503,716)	2,358,144
1,431,140	(490,730)	940,410	Other Retained Services		1,211,529	(456,848)	754,681
0	0	0	Covid-19 Income & Expenditure	B2A	3,706,660	(5,752,558)	(2,045,898)
46,785,889	(30,270,824)	16,515,065	Cost of Services	B1	52,535,384	(35,014,056)	17,521,328
3,673,828	(522,829)	3,150,999	Other Operating Expenditure	B3	3,995,785	(277,555)	3,718,230
2,425,166	(4,664,756)	(2,239,590)	Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure	B4	1,105,382	(5,147,760)	(4,042,378)
0	(19,556,315)	(19,556,315)	Taxation and Non-Specific Grant Income	B5	0	(19,965,643)	(19,965,643)
52,884,883	(55,014,724)	(2,129,841)	(Surplus) / Deficit on Provision of Services	B1 / B2	57,636,551	(60,405,014)	(2,768,463)
		(7,468,280)	(Surplus) / deficit on revaluation of non current assets				(139,756)
		20,000	(Gains) / Losses on Financial Instruments at FV through OCI				(50,000)
		(12,898,000)	Remeasurement of the net defined benefit liability				8,482,000
		(20,346,280)	Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure				8,292,244
		(22,476,121)	Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure				5,523,781

THE MOVEMENT IN RESERVES STATEMENT

	Note	Usable Reserves					Total Usable Reserves £	Unusable Reserves £	TOTAL RESERVES £
		General Fund - Unallocated £	General Fund - Earmarked £	Capital Receipts Reserve £	Capital Grants Unapplied £				
Balance at 1st April 2019		(12,657,896)	(9,565,618)	(5,348,318)	(5,001,889)	(32,573,721)	(63,397,085)	(95,970,806)	
Movements in reserves 2019/20		1,494,428	(1,494,428)	0	0	0	0	0	
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure		(2,129,841)	0	0	0	(2,129,841)	(20,346,280)	(22,476,121)	
Adjustments between accounting basis & funding basis under regulations	C1	533,312	0	(632,609)	(3,944,571)	(4,043,868)	4,043,868	0	
(Increase) / Decrease in Reserves 2019/20		(102,101)	(1,494,428)	(632,609)	(3,944,571)	(6,173,709)	(16,302,412)	(22,476,121)	
Balance at 31 March 2020		(12,759,997)	(11,060,046)	(5,980,927)	(8,946,460)	(38,747,430)	(79,699,497)	(118,446,927)	
Movements in reserves 2020/21		8,648,754	(8,648,754)	0	0	0	0	0	
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure		(2,768,463)		0	0	(2,768,463)	8,292,244	5,523,781	
Adjustments between accounting basis & funding basis under regulations	C1	(5,929,045)	613,042	(274,817)	1,005,900	(4,584,920)	4,584,920	0	
(Increase) / Decrease in Reserves 2020/21		(48,754)	(8,035,712)	(274,817)	1,005,900	(7,353,383)	12,877,164	5,523,781	
Balance at 31 March 2021		(12,808,751)	(19,095,758)	(6,255,744)	(7,940,560)	(46,100,813)	(66,822,334)	(112,923,146)	

BALANCE SHEET

31st March 2020 £		Note	31st March 2021 £
69,040,897	Property, Plant & Equipment	D1	67,642,584
91,084	Heritage Assets		91,084
52,082,002	Investment Property	D2	51,958,500
58,426	Intangible Assets	D3	37,478
14,272,211	Non-Current Investments	F2	15,437,351
5,101,536	Non-Current Debtors	D7	12,773,493
140,646,156	Non-Current Assets		147,940,489
3,107,779	Investments	F2	85,765
31,945	Inventories		35,382
9,239,912	Debtors	D4	21,933,306
10,205,589	Cash and Cash Equivalents		9,389,432
22,585,225	Current Assets		31,443,885
(12,066,982)	Creditors	D5	(28,095,363)
(1,769,356)	Creditors - s.106 balances	D5	(1,693,923)
(1,139,625)	Provisions	D6	(1,259,168)
(14,975,963)	Current Liabilities		(31,048,454)
(29,421,000)	Defined Benefit Pension Liability	F1	(35,003,000)
(387,491)	Capital Grants Receipts in Advance	B9	(409,774)
(29,808,491)	Non-Current Liabilities		(35,412,774)
118,446,927	Net Assets		112,923,146
(38,747,430)	Usable reserves		(46,100,813)
(79,699,497)	Unusable Reserves	C3	(66,822,334)
(118,446,927)	Total Reserves		(112,923,146)

These financial statements were certified by the Chief Finance Officer on 30 June 2021.

Elizabeth Griffiths, ACMA
Chief Finance Officer, West Oxfordshire District Council.

CASH FLOW STATEMENT

	Note	2019/20 £	2020/21 £
Net surplus or (deficit) on provision of services		2,129,841	2,768,463
Adjustments to net surplus or (deficit) on the provision of services to exclude non-cash movements	<i>E1a</i>	(109,149)	(8,889,087)
Adjustments for items included in the net surplus or (deficit) on the provision of services that are investing or financing activities	<i>E1b</i>	(5,223,004)	(1,147,229)
Net cash flows from Operating Activities		(3,202,312)	(7,267,853)
Investing Activities	<i>E1c</i>	9,217,800	6,451,696
Net increase or (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents		6,015,488	(816,157)
Cash and cash equivalents at 1 April		4,190,100	10,205,588
Cash and cash equivalents at 31 March		10,205,588	9,389,432
Comprising:			
Cash and bank current accounts		322,403	(530,716)
Short term investments		9,883,186	9,920,148
		10,205,589	9,389,432

NOTES TO THE COMPREHENSIVE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT

B1. Expenditure and Funding Analysis

	2020/2021					
	Net Expenditure in CI&ES £	Adjs. between accounting and funding basis £	Transfers to / (from) GF Earmarked Reserves £	Net Exp. Chargeable to the General Fund £	Management Reporting Adjs. £	Outturn Reported to Management £
<u>Joint Committee</u>						
Environmental and Regulatory Services	757,316	(154,141)	0	603,175	5,333	608,508
GO Shared Services	977,587	(105,598)	0	871,989	872	872,861
ICT, Change and Customer Services	1,900,318	(342,115)	0	1,558,203	148,129	1,706,332
Land, Legal and Property Services	913,171	(252,718)	0	660,453	171,821	832,274
Partnership MD and 2020 Programme Costs	0	0	0	0	0	0
Revenues and Housing Support Services	1,414,996	(205,598)	0	1,209,398	39,834	1,249,232
<u>Strategic Directors</u>						
Democratic Services	936,581	(25,310)	0	911,271	10	911,281
Environmental Services	6,508,632	(401,801)	0	6,106,831	614,381	6,721,212
Leisure and Communities Services	3,045,800	(2,109,907)	0	935,893	966,498	1,902,391
Planning and Strategic Housing Services	2,358,144	(1,906,242)	0	451,902	9,246	461,148
Other Retained Services	754,681	4,495,388	0	5,250,069	(3,259,531)	1,990,538
Covid-19 Income & Expenditure	(2,045,898)	0	2,207,884	161,986	0	161,986
Cost of Services	17,521,328	(1,008,042)	2,207,884	18,721,170	(1,303,407)	17,417,763
Other Income and Expenditure	(20,289,791)	(4,921,002)	6,440,870	(18,769,923)	1,303,407	(17,466,516)
(Surplus) / Deficit on Provision of Services	(2,768,463)	(5,929,044)	8,648,754	(48,753)	0	(48,753)
Opening General Fund Balance (Unallocated) at 1 April (Surplus) / Deficit for the year				(12,759,997) (48,753)		
Closing General Fund Balance (Unallocated) at 31 March				(12,808,750)		

NOTES TO THE COMPREHENSIVE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT

	2019/2020					
	Net Expenditure in CI&ES £	Adjs. between accounting and funding basis £	Transfers to /(from) GF Earmarked Reserves £	Net Exp. Chargeable to the General Fund £	Management Reporting Adjs. £	Outturn Reported to Management £
Joint Committee						
Environmental and Regulatory Services	702,463	(613,390)	0	89,073	425,349	514,422
GO Shared Services	997,515	(128,326)	0	869,189	1,795	870,984
ICT, Change and Customer Services	1,963,260	(386,458)	0	1,576,802	152,066	1,728,868
Land, Legal and Property Services	899,843	(248,934)	0	650,909	125,054	775,963
Partnership MD and 2020 Programme Costs	269,824	(14,389)	0	255,435	0	255,435
Revenues and Housing Support Services	242,228	(246,308)	0	(4,080)	22,445	18,365
Strategic Directors						
Democratic Services	1,044,119	(33,279)	0	1,010,840	0	1,010,840
Environmental Services	6,776,828	(26,336)	0	6,750,492	8,679	6,759,171
Leisure and Communities Services	1,525,330	(1,138,014)	0	387,316	763,053	1,150,369
Planning and Strategic Housing Services	1,153,245	(309,739)	0	843,506	10,398	853,904
Other Retained Services	940,410	(34,930)	0	905,480	1,760	907,240
Cost of Services	16,515,065	(3,180,103)	0	13,334,962	1,510,599	14,845,561
Other Income and Expenditure	(18,644,906)	3,713,414	1,494,428	(13,437,064)	(1,510,599)	(14,947,663)
(Surplus) / Deficit on Provision of Services	(2,129,841)	533,311	1,494,428	(102,102)	0	(102,102)
Opening General Fund Balance (Unallocated) at 1 April				(12,657,896)		
(Surplus) / Deficit for the year				(102,102)		
Budgeted contribution to GF				0		
Closing General Fund Balance (Unallocated) at 31 March				(12,759,998)		

NOTES TO THE COMPREHENSIVE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT

Adjustments between accounting basis and funding basis

The Expenditure and Funding Analysis shows how annual expenditure is used and funded compared with the resources consumed or earned by the Council in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices as shown in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Account. It also shows how these amounts are allocated for decision making purposes across the Council's Directorates and Services. The adjustments between these amounts are detailed below:

	2020/2021						
	Adjustments between funding and accounting basis (see MiRS Note C1)			Adjustments between amounts chargeable to the General Fund and Management Reporting			
	Capital Adjs £	Pension Adjs £	Other Adjs £	Total adjs between funding and accounting £	Depreciation £	Other Segment Adjs. £	Total Management Reporting Adjustments £
<u>Joint Committee</u>							
Environmental and Regulatory Services	1,610	152,531	0	154,141	1,610	3,723	5,333
Finance, Human Resources & Procurement	1,197	104,401	0	105,598	1,197	(325)	872
ICT, Change and Customer Services	149,346	192,769	0	342,115	149,346	(1,217)	148,129
Land, Legal and Property Services	222,500	30,218	0	252,718	164,741	7,080	171,821
Partnership MD and 2020 Programme Costs	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Revenues and Housing Support Services	19,737	185,861	0	205,598	19,737	20,097	39,834
<u>Strategic Directors</u>							
Democratic Services	0	25,310	0	25,310	0	10	10
Environmental Services	505,453	(103,652)	0	401,801	505,453	108,928	614,381
Leisure and Communities Services	2,009,429	100,478	0	2,109,907	921,909	44,589	966,498
Planning and Strategic Housing Services	1,670,832	235,410	0	1,906,242	5,459	3,787	9,246
Other Retained Services	0	(4,504,326)	8,938	(4,495,388)	0	(3,259,531)	(3,259,531)
Cost of Services	4,580,104	(3,581,000)	8,938	1,008,042	1,769,452	(3,072,859)	(1,303,407)
Other Income and Expenditure	(1,976,538)	681,000	6,216,540	4,921,002	(1,769,452)	3,072,859	1,303,407
(Surplus) / Deficit on Provision of Services	2,603,566	(2,900,000)	6,225,478	5,929,044	0	0	0

NOTES TO THE COMPREHENSIVE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT

	2019/2020						
	Adjustments between funding and accounting basis (see MiRS Note C1)			Total adjs between funding and accounting	Adjustments between amounts chargeable to the General Fund and Management Reporting		Total Management Reporting Adjustments
	Capital Adjs	Pension Adjs	Other Adjs		Depreciation	Other Segment Adjs.	
£	£	£	£	£	£	£	
<u>Joint Committee</u>							
Environmental and Regulatory Services	425,349	188,041	0	613,390	425,349	0	425,349
GO Shared Services	1,795	126,531	0	128,326	1,795	0	1,795
ICT, Change and Customer Services	152,066	234,392	0	386,458	152,066	0	152,066
Land, Legal and Property Services	203,854	45,080	0	248,934	125,054	0	125,054
Partnership MD and 2020 Programme Costs	0	14,389	0	14,389	0	0	0
Revenues and Housing Support Services	22,445	223,863	0	246,308	22,445	0	22,445
<u>Strategic Directors</u>							
Democratic Services	0	33,279	0	33,279	0	0	0
Environmental Services	5,680	20,656	0	26,336	5,680	2,999	8,679
Leisure and Communities Services	1,011,016	126,998	0	1,138,014	763,053	0	763,053
Planning and Strategic Housing Services	10,398	299,341	0	309,739	10,398	0	10,398
Other Retained Services	52,500	(17,570)	0	34,930	2,120	(360)	1,760
Cost of Services	1,885,103	1,295,000	0	3,180,103	1,507,960	2,639	1,510,599
Other Income and Expenditure	(5,558,061)	979,000	865,647	(3,713,414)	(1,507,960)	(2,639)	(1,510,599)
(Surplus) / Deficit on Provision of Services	(3,672,958)	2,274,000	865,647	(533,311)	0	0	0

NOTES TO THE COMPREHENSIVE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT

Capital Adjustments

This column adjusts for depreciation and impairment, revaluations gains and losses in service lines and for transfers of income / net value of assets written off on disposals in Other Operating Income and Expenditure. Taxation and Non Specific Grant Income is credited with capital grants receivable in the year without conditions or for which conditions were satisfied in the year.

Pension Adjustments

This column removes the impact of IAS19 Employee Benefits. For services, this removes current or past service costs and replaces them with the actual employer pension contributions payable. In Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure, the net interest on the net defined benefit liability is removed.

Other Adjustments

This adjustment represents the difference between the amounts chargeable under statutory regulations for Council Tax and Non Domestic Rates and the income recognised under generally accepted accounting practices in the Code. This is a timing difference as any difference will be brought forward in future Surpluses or Deficits on the Collection Fund.

B2. Expenditure and Income Analysed by Nature

	2019/20 £	2020/21 £
Expenditure		
Employee benefits expenses	2,489,333	1,603,350
Publica Contract Charges	9,665,800	9,436,327
Housing Benefit & Other Transfer Payments	16,653,536	17,358,171
Covid grant payments	0	3,778,768
Other service expenses	14,358,958	13,859,723
Depreciation, amortisation and impairment	2,811,483	1,769,452
Interest payments and similar expense	979,000	681,000
Precepts and Levies	3,607,826	3,929,780
Other expenditure	2,318,947	5,219,979
Total Expenditure	52,884,883	57,636,550
Income		
Fees, charges & other service income	(13,741,410)	(9,915,244)
Housing Benefit Subsidy	(17,203,768)	(17,166,683)
Government Grants (incl Covid)	(7,070,659)	(22,322,961)
Income from Council Tax	(8,040,587)	(8,687,828)
Income from Non Domestic Rates	(3,260,234)	4,217,350
Non Government Grants & Contributions	(3,131,067)	(2,763,844)
Investment Interest and similar income	(903,821)	(794,457)
Other income	(1,663,178)	(2,971,346)
Total Income	(55,014,724)	(60,405,013)
(Surplus) / Deficit on Provision of Services	(2,129,841)	(2,768,463)

NOTES TO THE COMPREHENSIVE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT

B2a COVID Grants

Expenditure	£
High Street Re-Opening	33,393
Compliance & Enforcement	36,917
Business Support Grants (ARG)	3,304,204
Contain Outbreak Management	34,528
Community Testing Centre	13,021
Emergency Food	54,610
Winter Grants	68,000
Corona Virus - other	161,985
	3,706,658
Income	£
High Street Re-Opening	(33,393)
Compliance & Enforcement	(36,917)
Business Support Grants (ARG)	(5,066,971)
Contain Outbreak Management	(479,645)
Community Testing Centre	(13,021)
Emergency Food	(54,610)
Winter Grants	(68,000)
	(5,752,557)

B3. Other Operating Income and Expenditure

	2019/20	2020/21
	£	£
(Gains) / losses on disposal of non current assets	(32,152)	(10,409)
Unattached capital receipts	(490,677)	(267,145)
Town and Parish Council support grant	66,002	66,005
Town and Parish Council precepts	3,607,826	3,929,780
	3,150,999	3,718,231

NOTES TO THE COMPREHENSIVE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT

B4. Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure

	2019/20	2020/21
	£	£
Interest payable and similar charges	2,192	0
Interest receivable and similar income	(844,663)	(795,252)
Movement in the fair value of financial assets*	1,224,723	(1,112,699)
Movement in the creditor loss allowance	0	497,874
Movement in the fair value of investment property	(62,500)	257,434
Net investment property (income) / expenditure	(3,538,342)	(3,570,735)
Net interest on the net defined benefit pension liability	979,000	681,000
	(2,239,590)	(4,042,378)

*Movement in the fair value of financial assets largely reflects the fall in value at balance sheet date of pooled investment funds.

B5. Taxation and Non Specific Grant Income

	2019/20	2020/21
	£	£
National Non Domestic Rates:		
- Redistribution	(3,223,756)	(3,853,815)
- Renewable Energy	(203,125)	(221,075)
- Business rates levy	1,669,682	1,366,891
- Surplus from the pool	(607,199)	(445,269)
- (Surplus) / Deficit	(733,290)	7,150,681
	(3,097,688)	3,997,413
Council Tax income (Council and Town/Parish Council shares)	(8,040,586)	(8,687,828)
Revenue Support Grant	(77,568)	(78,830)
New Homes Bonus	(1,763,143)	(2,068,690)
S31 NDR Compensation Grant	(2,043,923)	(8,938,593)
Capital grants and contributions	(2,931,134)	(1,071,604)
Other non-ringfenced government grants	(1,602,273)	(1,933,302)
LG Compensation schemed for lost sales, fees and charges		(1,184,209)
	(19,556,315)	(19,965,643)

B6. Members' Allowances

	2019/20	2020/21
	£	£
Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances	354,177	365,054
Expenses	8,488	487
	362,665	365,541

NOTES TO THE COMPREHENSIVE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT

B7. External Audit Costs

The Council has incurred the following costs in relation to the audit of the Statement of Accounts, certification of grant claims and statutory inspections, and to non-audit services provided by the Council's external auditors (Grant Thornton UK LLP):

	2019/20 £	2020/21 £
External audit services carried out by the appointed auditor	35,527	58,277
Certification of grant claims and returns	15,650	13,500
	51,177	71,777

Most disclosures within the Statement of Accounts give additional details about the amounts receivable and payable included in the core statements. The amounts for External Audit Costs are disclosed in accordance with annually agreed audit fee schedules.

Additional fees of £7,500 were payable in 2020/21 in respect of the 2018/19 audit and £18,120 in respect of the 2019/20 audit. It is anticipated that £7,250 will be payable in 2021/22 in final settlement for the 2019/20 audit.

NOTES TO THE COMPREHENSIVE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT

B8. Officer Remuneration

Senior Officer Remuneration

The Council's senior officers are those with statutory responsibility within the Council.

Post	2020/2021		
	Salary, allowances & other benefits £	Pension Contributions £	Total Remuneration £
Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service	80,977	14,252	95,229
Chief Finance Officer1	6,568	1,327	7,894
Chief Finance Officer/Deputy Chief Executive2	61,677	10,855	72,532
Monitoring Officer	63,267	10,954	74,222
	212,489	37,388	249,877
Post	2019/2020		
	Salary, allowances & other benefits £	Pension Contributions £	Total Remuneration £
Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service	86,257	13,350	99,608
Chief Finance Officer1	78,810	12,846	91,656
Monitoring Officer	70,467	9,597	80,063
	235,534	35,793	271,327

- Until 6th June 2020 The Chief Finance Officer was an employee of Cotswold District Council, who acted as Chief Finance Officer for both Cotswold District Council and West Oxfordshire District Councils. The costs shown above represent the employment cost incurred and paid by Cotswold District Council from 1st April to 5th June 2020 with 50% of these costs charged to West Oxfordshire, although the full salary and employment costs for the individual are shown above for comparability and transparency. From 6th June 2020 The Chief Finance Officer and Deputy Chief Executive has been an employee of West Oxfordshire District Council.

Other Officer Remuneration

The majority of the Council's staff TUPE-transferred to Publica Group (Support) Limited on 1 November 2017, only a small number of staff are now employed directly by the Council and none of the Authority's employees (excluding those identified above) received more than £50,000 remuneration of the year. (No employees received more than £50,000 in 2019/20).

NOTES TO THE COMPREHENSIVE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT

B9. Grant Income

The following significant grants and contributions were credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement during the year.

	2019/20	2020/21
	£	£
<u>Revenue grants credited to Cost of Services</u>		
Housing Benefit Subsidy	(17,095,027)	(16,982,983)
Housing Benefit Administration Subsidy	(185,311)	(183,700)
Other grants	0	0
	(17,280,338)	(17,166,683)
<u>Revenue grants credited to Taxation and Non Specific Grant Income</u>		
New homes bonus grant	(1,763,143)	(2,068,690)
Revenue Support Grant	(77,568)	(78,830)
S31 NDR compensation grant	(2,043,923)	(8,938,593)
Rural services delivery grant	(126,956)	(126,956)
Other specific government grants	(1,475,317)	(1,806,346)
	(5,486,907)	(13,019,415)
<u>Capital grants credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement</u>		
Better Care Funding	(730,704)	(785,467)
S.106 Receipts & other capital grants	(2,931,134)	(1,071,604)
	(3,661,838)	(1,857,071)

Where the Council has been given grants or contributions with conditions attached, which the Council has yet to meet, these grants are treated as receipts in advance until the conditions are met. The grants and contributions held at the balance sheet date are as follows:

	2019/20	2020/21
	£	£
Environment Agency Grant [for specific Land drainage works]	(174,266)	(174,266)
Better Care Grant Funding	(213,225)	(235,508)
Long Term Capital Receipt in advance	(387,491)	(409,774)
S106 Capital Contributions [due to third parties]	(170,865)	(203,818)
Short Term Capital Receipt in advance	(170,865)	(203,818)
Total Capital Receipt in Advance	(558,356)	(613,592)

NOTES TO THE COMPREHENSIVE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT

B10. Termination Benefits

Redundancy and Compensation

There is no redundancy and compensation cost in 2020/21.

Pension Strain

There is no pensions strain cost in 2020/21 (nil in 2019/20). Any additional contributions (strain contributions and augmentation contributions) that are due to be paid in the year by the Council, under any agreement with the pension fund, are recognised immediately as an expense

Exit Packages

There is no exit package cost charged to the Council's Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement for the current year.

NOTES TO THE MOVEMENT IN RESERVES STATEMENT

C1. Adjustments Between Accounting Basis and Funding Basis Under Regulations

	2020/21			
	General Fund - Unallocated £	General Fund - Earmarked £	Capital Receipts Reserve £	Capital Grants Unapplied £
Capital Adjustments				
<u>Reversal of entries included in the CI&ES relating to Capital Expenditure</u>				
Charges for depreciation, amortisation and impairment	(1,769,452)	0	0	0
Revaluation losses on Property, Plant and Equipment	(57,759)	0	0	0
Movements in the fair value of Investment Properties	(257,434)	0	0	0
Capital Grants and Contributions applied	2,151,892	0	0	0
Revenue Expenditure funded from Capital Under Statute	(4,904,785)	0	0	0
Non current assets written off on disposal or sale	(75,623)	0	0	0
<u>Adjustments between Capital & Revenue Resources</u>				
Transfer of cash sale proceeds from disposal of non current assets	75,623	0	0	0
Capital expenditure charged against General Fund Balance	540,100	613,042	0	0
Statutory provision for the repayment of debt	344,715	0	0	0
Capital grants and contributions credited to CI&ES	1,071,603	0	0	(1,071,603)
Unattached Capital Receipts	277,553	0	(277,553)	0
<u>Adjustments to Capital Resources</u>				
Application of grants to capital financing trfd to CAA	0	0	0	2,077,503
Use of capital receipts reserve to finance new capital expenditure	0	0	684,649	0
Capital loan repaid			(91,461)	
Transfer from Deferred Capital Receipts on receipt of cash	0	0	(590,452)	0
Financial Instrument Adjustments				
Reversal of changes in fair value on Pooled Investment Funds	1,112,699	0	0	0
Pension Adjustments				
Pension costs transferred to / (from) the Pensions Reserve	2,900,000	0	0	0
Accumulated Absences Adjustments				
Movement in accumulated absences adjustment transferred to / (from) Accumulated Absences Adjustment Account	(8,938)	0	0	0
Other Adjustments				
Council Tax and NDR transfers to / (from) the Collection Fund Adjustment Account	(7,329,239)	0	0	0
	(5,929,045)	613,042	(274,817)	1,005,900

NOTES TO THE MOVEMENT IN RESERVES STATEMENT

	2019/20			
	General Fund - Unallocated £	General Fund - Earmarked £	Capital Receipts Reserve £	Capital Grants Unapplied £
Capital Adjustments				
<u>Reversal of entries included in the CI&ES relating to Capital Expenditure</u>				
Charges for depreciation, amortisation and impairment	(1,507,959)	0	0	0
Revaluation losses on Property, Plant and Equipment	(78,800)	0	0	0
Movements in the fair value of Investment Properties	62,500	0	0	0
Capital Grants and Contributions applied	6,259,468	0	0	0
Revenue Expenditure funded from Capital Under Statute	(2,318,949)	0	0	0
Non current assets written off on disposal or sale	(563,844)	0	0	0
<u>Adjustments between Capital & Revenue Resources</u>				
Transfer of cash sale proceeds from disposal of non current assets	563,844	0	(532,744)	0
Capital expenditure charged against General Fund Balance	540,100	0	0	0
Statutory provision for the repayment of debt	193,769	0	0	0
Capital grants and contributions credited to CI&ES	0	0	0	(4,138,833)
Unattached Capital receipts	522,829	0	(522,829)	0
<u>Adjustments to Capital Resources</u>				
Application of grants to capital financing trfd to CAA	0	0	0	194,262
Use of capital receipts reserve to finance new capital expenditure	0	0	458,480	0
Transfer from Deferred Capital Receipts on receipt of cash	0	0	(35,516)	0
Financial Instrument Adjustments				
Reversal of changes in fair value on Pooled Investment Funds	(1,342,636)	0	0	0
Pension Adjustments				
Pension costs transferred to / (from) the Pensions Reserve	(2,274,000)	0	0	0
Other Adjustments				
Council Tax and NDR transfers to / (from) the Collection Fund Adjustment Account	476,990	0	0	0
	533,312	0	(632,609)	(3,944,571)

NOTES TO THE MOVEMENT IN RESERVES STATEMENT

C2. Usable Reserves

Earmarked Reserves

The Council's General Fund comprises an unallocated element, used to meet day-to-day spending and 'Earmarked Reserves' – amounts set aside to provide financing for future specific expenditure or projects.

Movements in 'Earmarked Reserves' during the year are shown below:

Earmarked Reserves	Balance 1 April 2020 £	Transfers between reserves £	Transfers Out £	Transfers in £	Balance 31 March 2021 £
High Speed Broadband	(1,578,851)		369,634		(1,209,217)
Investment Property Improvement	(298,662)		133,932		(164,730)
Business Rate Movement	(567,092)		67,092		(500,000)
DCLG Community Housing Fund	(226,422)		61,393		(165,029)
Garden Village Grant	(494,858)		116,054	(250,000)	(628,804)
Benefits Subsidy Smoothing Reserve	(775,000)	75,000			(700,000)
Service Resilience Reserve	(23,000)		23,000		0
Flexible Homelessness Support Grant	(194,959)				(194,959)
Rev & Bens One-off Grant Funding	(205,330)	(75,000)	192,150		(88,180)
Delivery of Council Priorities	(835,357)	600,000	109,445	(397,787)	(523,699)
Syrian Refugees Reserve	(298,793)				(298,793)
Additional Pension contribution in 2020	(3,627,098)		3,627,098		0
Economic Development Reserve	(270,000)		270,000		0
Covid Workstreams		(600,000)			(600,000)
Additional Restrictions Grant	0			(1,762,767)	(1,762,767)
Contain Outbreak Management Grant	0			(445,118)	(445,118)
Business Rates Deficit	0			(7,050,000)	(7,050,000)
Covid Recovery	0			(1,000,000)	(1,000,000)
Publica Contract Growth	0			(1,500,000)	(1,500,000)
New Burdens	0			(170,000)	(170,000)
Project Contingency	0			(150,000)	(150,000)
Other earmarked reserves	(1,664,624)		296,482	(576,320)	(1,944,462)
	(11,060,046)	0	5,266,280	(13,301,992)	(19,095,758)

NOTES TO THE MOVEMENT IN RESERVES STATEMENT

C3. Unusable Reserves

Summary of Unusable Reserves

	2019/20	2020/21
	£	£
Revaluation Reserve	(33,317,711)	(32,947,419)
Capital Adjustment Account	(73,563,832)	(73,821,532)
Pension Reserve	29,421,000	35,003,000
Deferred Capital Receipts Reserve	(3,607,662)	(2,600,568)
Collection Fund Adjustment Account	(8,981)	7,320,258
Accumulated Absences Account	6,648	15,587
Pooled Investment Fund Reserve	1,351,041	238,342
Financial Instruments Revaluation Reserve	20,000	(30,000)
	(79,699,497)	(66,822,332)

Revaluation Reserve

The Revaluation Reserve contains the gains made by the Authority from increases in the value of its Property, Plant and Equipment. The balance is reduced when assets with accumulated gains are:

- re-valued downwards or impaired and the gains are lost
- used in the provision of services and the gains are consumed through depreciation, or
- disposed of and the gains are realised.

The reserve contains only revaluation gains accumulated since 1st April 2007, the date that the Reserve was created. Accumulated gains arising before that date are consolidated into the balance on the Capital Adjustment Account.

	2019/20	2020/21
	£	£
Opening Balance - 1 April	(26,252,487)	(33,317,711)
Upward revaluation of assets	(9,883,785)	(1,488,838)
Downward revaluation of assets and impairment losses not charged to the Surplus/Deficit on the Provision of Services	2,415,505	1,349,082
<i>Surplus / deficit on revaluation of non current assets not posted to the Surplus/Deficit on the Provision of Services</i>	<i>(7,468,280)</i>	<i>(139,756)</i>
Difference between fair value and historic cost depreciation	403,056	510,048
Other balances written out to the Capital Adjustment Account	0	0
<i>Amount written off to the Capital Adjustment Account</i>	<i>403,056</i>	<i>510,048</i>
Closing Balance - 31 March	(33,317,711)	(32,947,419)

NOTES TO THE MOVEMENT IN RESERVES STATEMENT

Capital Adjustment Account

The Capital Adjustment Account absorbs the timing differences arising from the different arrangements for accounting for the consumption of non-current assets and for financing the acquisition, construction or enhancement of those assets under statutory provisions. The Account is debited with the cost of acquisition, construction or enhancement while depreciation, impairment losses and amortisations are charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. The Account is credited with the amounts set aside by the authority as finance for the costs of acquisition, construction and enhancement.

The Account contains accumulated gains and losses on Investment Properties. The Account also contains revaluation gains accumulated on Property, Plant and Equipment before 1st April 2007 [the date at which the Revaluation Reserve was created to hold such gains].

	2019/20 £	2020/21 £
Opening Balance - 1st April	(74,060,582)	(73,563,832)
<u>Reversal of items relating to capital expenditure debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement</u>		
Charges for depreciation of non current assets	1,507,959	1,769,452
Revaluation losses on Property, Plant and Equipment	78,800	57,759
Revenue expenditure funded from capital under statute	2,318,949	4,904,785
Amounts of non-current assets written off on disposal or sale as part of the gain/loss on disposal to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	563,844	75,623
	4,469,552	6,807,619
<u>Adjusting amounts written out of the Revaluation Reserve</u>		
Amounts written out on disposal or sale of non current assets	0	0
Historical cost depreciation adjustment	(403,056)	(510,048)
	(403,056)	(510,048)
Net written out amount of the cost of non current assets consumed in year	4,066,496	6,297,571
<u>Capital financing applied in year</u>		
Use of the Capital Receipts Reserve to finance new capital expenditure	(458,480)	(593,188)
Capital grants and contributions credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement that have been applied to capital financing	(2,120,635)	(2,151,892)
Earmarked Reserves credited to Ci&ES to capital financing	0	(613,039)
Application of grants to capital financing from the Capital Grants Unapplied Account	(194,262)	(2,077,503)
Statutory provision for the repayment of debt	(193,769)	(344,715)
Capital expenditure charged against the General Fund Balance	(540,100)	(540,100)
	(3,507,246)	(6,320,437)
Movements in the market value of Investment Properties debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	(62,500)	257,434
Transfer from Deferred Cap Rerserves		(492,268)
Closing Balance - 31 March	(73,563,832)	(73,821,532)

NOTES TO THE MOVEMENT IN RESERVES STATEMENT

Pension Reserve

The Pensions Reserve absorbs the timing differences arising from the different arrangements for accounting for post-employment benefits and for funding benefits in accordance with statutory provisions. The Authority accounts for post-employment benefits in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as the benefits are earned by employees accruing years of service, updating the liabilities recognised to reflect inflation, changing assumptions and investment returns on any resources set aside to meet the costs.

Statutory arrangements require benefits earned to be financed as the Council makes employer's contributions to the pension fund or pays any pensions for which it is directly responsible. The negative balance on the Pensions Reserve represents a shortfall in the benefits earned by past and current employees and the resources the Authority has set aside to meet them. The statutory arrangements will ensure that funding will have been set aside by the time the benefits come to be paid.

	2019/20	2020/21
	£	£
Opening Balance - 1 April	40,045,000	29,421,000
Return on plan assets	4,389,000	(12,101,000)
Remeasurement of the net defined benefit liability	(17,287,000)	20,583,000
Reversal of items debited or credited to the Surplus or Deficit on Provision of Services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	3,099,000	2,552,000
Employers' pension contributions	(825,000)	(5,452,000)
Closing Balance - 31 March	29,421,000	35,003,000

Deferred Capital Receipts Reserve

The Deferred Capital Receipts Reserve holds the gains recognised on the disposal of non-current assets but for which cash settlement has yet to take place. Under statutory arrangements, the Council does not treat these gains as usable for financing new capital expenditure until they are backed by cash receipts. When the deferred cash settlement eventually takes place, amounts are transferred to the Capital Receipts Reserve.

	2019/20	2020/21
	£	£
Opening Balance - 1 April	(3,612,079)	(3,607,662)
New loans / new deferred receipt	(563,844)	(75,626)
Transfer to the Capital Receipts Reserve on receipt of cash	568,261	590,452
Movement between reserves		492,268
Closing Balance - 31 March	(3,607,662)	(2,600,568)

NOTES TO THE MOVEMENT IN RESERVES STATEMENT

Collection Fund Adjustment Account

The Collection Fund Adjustment Account manages the differences arising from the recognition of council tax income in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as it falls due from council tax payers compared with the statutory arrangements for paying across amounts to the General Fund from the Collection Fund.

	Balance 1 April 2020 £	Transfers in £	Balance 31 March 2021 £
Amounts by which income credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement is different from income calculated for the year in accordance with statutory requirements:			
Council Tax	(101,806)	(57,044)	(158,850)
NDR	92,825	7,386,283	7,479,108
	(8,981)	7,329,239	7,320,258

Accumulated Absences Adjustment Account

The Accumulated Absences Account absorbs the differences that would otherwise arise on the General Fund Balance from accruing for compensated absences earned but not taken in the year [the cost of the annual leave entitlement still owed by the Council to its employees at 31st March].

	2019/20 £	2020/21 £
Opening Balance - 1 April	6,648	6,648
Movement in year	0	8,939
Closing Balance - 31 March	6,648	15,587

NOTES TO THE MOVEMENT IN RESERVES STATEMENT

Pooled Investment Fund Adjustment Account

The pooled investment fund adjustment account is used solely for the purpose of recognising fair value gains and losses on the Council's pooled investment funds under statutory provisions.

	2019/20	2020/21
	£	£
Opening Balance - 1 April	8,405	1,351,041
Changes in fair value of Pooled Investment Funds	1,342,636	(1,112,699)
Closing Balance - 31 March	1,351,041	238,342

Financial Instruments Revaluation Reserve

The financial instruments revaluation reserve contains the gains and losses arising from changes in the fair value of its investments that are measured at fair value through other comprehensive income.

	2019/20	2020/21
	£	£
Opening Balance - 1 April	0	20,000
Changes in fair value of financial assets elected to FV through Other Comprehensive Income	20,000	(50,000)
Closing Balance - 31 March	20,000	(30,000)

NOTES TO THE BALANCE SHEET

D1. Property, Plant and Equipment

Property, Plant and Equipment

Movements in 2020/21	Land & Buildings £	Vehicles, Plant & Equipment £	Community Assets £	Surplus Assets £	TOTAL P&P&E £
- Asset Cost or Valuation					
Asset values at 1 April 2020	63,204,514	2,379,000	917,659	3,637,239	70,138,412
Additions	57,985	285,834			343,819
Revaluation increases / (decreases)	(1,104,689)			(88,420)	(1,193,109)
Reclassification	(235,000)			235,000	0
Derecognition - disposals		(237,372)			(237,372)
Asset values at 31 March 2021	61,922,810	2,427,462	917,659	3,783,819	69,051,750
- Depreciation					
Accumulated depreciation at 1 April 2020	(92,536)	(1,004,979)	0	0	(1,097,515)
Depreciation charge for the year	(1,323,448)	(425,056)	0	0	(1,748,504)
Depreciation written out on revaluation	1,270,888		0	4,218	1,275,106
Derecognition - disposals	0	161,746	0	0	161,746
Derecognition - others	4,218		0	(4,218)	0
Accumulated depreciation at 31 March 2021	(140,878)	(1,268,289)	0	0	(1,409,167)
- Net Book Value of Assets					
1st April 2020	63,111,978	1,374,021	917,659	3,637,239	69,040,897
31st March 2021	61,781,932	1,159,173	917,659	3,783,819	67,642,584

NOTES TO THE BALANCE SHEET

Movements in 2019/20	Land & Buildings £	Vehicles, Plant & Equipment £	Community Assets £	Surplus Assets £	Assets under Construction £	TOTAL P&P&E £
Asset Cost or Valuation						
Asset values at 1 April 2019	48,801,757	2,751,723	917,659	3,389,719	2,235,362	58,096,220
Additions	117,808	751,546	0	0	6,087,486	6,956,840
Revaluation increases / (decreases)	5,962,101	0	0	247,520	0	6,209,621
Reclassification	8,322,848	0	0	0	(8,322,848)	
Derecognition - disposals	0	(1,124,269)	0	0	0	(1,124,269)
Asset values at 31 March 2019	63,204,514	2,379,000	917,659	3,637,239	0	70,138,412
Depreciation						
Accumulated depreciation at 1 April 2019	(238,802)	(1,130,844)	0	0	0	(1,369,646)
Depreciation charge for the year	(1,033,593)	(434,560)	0	0	0	(1,468,153)
Depreciation written out on revaluation	1,179,859		0	0	0	1,179,859
Derecognition - disposals		560,425	0	0	0	560,425
Other movements	0	0	0	0	0	
Accumulated depreciation at 31 March 2019	(92,536)	(1,004,979)	0	0	0	(1,097,515)
Net Book Value of Assets						
1st April 2019	48,562,955	1,620,879	917,659	3,389,719	2,235,362	56,726,574
31st March 2019	63,111,978	1,374,021	917,659	3,637,239	0	69,040,897

The Code requires that assets are formally revalued at least every 5-years. Assets are formally revalued as part of a 5-year rolling programme, with assets revalued more frequently if there is evidence that asset values may have changed. The table below summarises valuations undertaken, by year:

	Land & Buildings £000	Vehicles, Plant & Equipment £000	Community Assets £000	Surplus Assets £000	Total PPE £000
Carried at (depreciated) historic cost	0	1,159	918	0	2,077
Valued at current value as at 31 March:					
2016/17	0	0	0	0	0
2017/18	0	0	0	0	0
2018/19	1,309	0	0	341	1,650
2019/20	1,025	0	0	35	1,060
2020/21	59,448	0	0	3,408	62,856
Total	61,782	1,159	918	3,784	67,643

NOTES TO THE BALANCE SHEET

Asset valuation, amortisation and depreciation

Service areas are charged depreciation to represent the real cost of holding and using non-current assets. The value of an asset (less any residual value) will be written-down on a straight-line basis over the useful economic life of the asset. The following useful lives have been used in the calculation of depreciation and amortisation:

- Land assets are generally not depreciated
- Operational buildings are typically depreciated over 30 to 60 year useful lives, depending upon the particular asset and an estimate of the asset life from the Council's valuer
- Car Parks – over 20-years or a lifetime agreed with the Council's valuer
- Vehicles, Plant and Equipment are depreciated over 5 to 7 years as appropriate
- Surplus assets will have lives based upon the type of asset – eg. Buildings 30 to 60 years, land indefinite lifespans. Useful economic lives will be agreed with the valuer.
- Heritage and Community Assets are not depreciated

Capital Commitments

The purchase of The Old Courthouse in Witney has been agreed for the provision of temporary emergency accommodation to homeless people. The sale was completed on 21st April 2021 for £1,274,471.

Effects of changes in estimates

The Council has not made any changes in its accounting estimates in either the life or depreciation methods of assets during the year.

Revaluations

The 2020/21 PPE valuations and impairment review were undertaken by Mr. W. McMahon BA (Hons) MRICS, of Publica Group (Support) Ltd. Valuations were undertaken in accordance with the methodologies and bases for estimation set out in the professional standards of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors and the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom.

Assets are valued as part of a rolling programme of revaluations. All assets are valued on a 5-year rolling programme.

In estimating asset values it has been assumed that:

- The capacity of utility services [electricity, gas, water, mains drainage] are adequate for the future use of the properties
- All assets have planning consent for their existing uses
- Tenancies are not subject to any unusual or onerous restrictions
- No contamination exists in relation to property assets [land and buildings] sufficient enough to affect value.

With the introduction and application of IFRS13 in 2015/16, the Council's surplus assets have been reviewed and measured at fair value based upon 'highest and best use'. The surplus assets that the Council owns are strips of land and therefore they are not depreciated. Within the fair-value hierarchy, the Council's Surplus Assets are deemed as 'level 2' category. The Surplus Assets valuation was undertaken by Mr. W. McMahon BA (Hons) MRICS, of West Oxfordshire District Council.

NOTES TO THE BALANCE SHEET

D2. Investment Properties

The following items of income and expenditure have been accounted for in the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

	2019/20	2020/21
	£	£
Rental income	(3,759,784)	(3,737,683)
Direct operating expenses	221,443	166,948
Net (gains) / losses from fair value adjustments	(62,500)	257,434
	(3,600,841)	(3,313,301)

There are no restrictions on the Council's ability to realise the value inherent in its investment property or on the Council's right to the remittance of income and the proceeds of disposal. There are contractual obligations on the Council to repair and maintain certain investment properties and these have been included in the relevant property valuations.

The 2020/21 Investment Property valuations were undertaken by the in house valuation team. The valuations were undertaken in accordance with the methodologies and bases for estimation set out in the professional standards of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (as outlined in Note D1 above).

Under the CIPFA Code the Council's Investment Properties are classified as 'level 2' within the fair-value hierarchy. The assets have been suitably valued, based upon current market conditions, sale prices for similar assets, or contractual income for the properties. These observable inputs have been used to classify the assets accordingly. There have been no movements between categories within the hierarchy during the year.

The following table summarises the movement in the fair value of investment properties over the year:

	2019/20	2020/21
	£	£
Opening Balance - 1 April	52,019,502	52,082,002
Additions	0	133,932
Net gains / (losses) from fair value adjustments	62,500	(257,434)
Reclassification - transfer to Property, Plant & Equipment	0	0
Closing Balance - 31 March	52,082,002	51,958,500

Fair value hierarchy

International Financial Reporting Standard 13 (IFRS13) '*Fair Values*' requires all assets measured at fair value to be classified into one of three levels, depending upon the basis of valuation. The 'fair value' of an asset is the reasonable estimation of its market value if sold.

The Council's Investment Property assets are deemed to be categorised as Level 2 in the valuation hierarchy, as the fair value of the assets have been derived primarily from income streams. Authorities are required to maximise the use of level 1 inputs (available prices) and minimise the use of level 3 inputs (calculations based upon non-market data such as cash-flow forecasts and other non-market data).

NOTES TO THE BALANCE SHEET

D3. Intangible Assets

The Council accounts for its software as intangible assets, to the extent that the software is not an integral part of a particular IT system and is accounted for as part of the hardware item of Property, Plant and Equipment. The intangible assets include purchased software only, as the Authority has no internally generated software.

All intangible assets are amortised on a straight-line basis over a 5 year period. This represents the period over which the software is expected to be of use to the Council.

Amortisation of intangible assets is charged to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Account. For service-specific systems, amortisation is charged direct to the service using the asset. For corporate systems amortisation is allocated across all services benefitting from the asset.

Movements in Intangible Assets

	2019/20	2020/21
	£	£
-		
<u>Asset Cost or Valuation</u>		
Asset values at 1 April	541,276	232,770
Additions		
Derecognition	(308,506)	
Asset values at 31 March	232,770	232,770
-		
<u>Amortisation</u>		
Accumulated Amortisation at 1 April	(443,044)	(174,344)
Amortisation charge for the year	(39,806)	(20,948)
Derecognition	308,506	0
Accumulated Amortisation at 31 March	(174,344)	(195,292)
-		
-		
Net carrying amount at 31 March	58,426	37,478

NOTES TO THE BALANCE SHEET

D4. Current Debtors

	2019/20	2020/21
	£	£
Government Departments	2,824,754	11,677,444
Other Local Authorities [Statutory]	524,800	3,623,726
Other Local Authorities [Trading]	2,138,880	885,577
Collection Fund debtors (WODC Share)	713,205	1,551,481
Housing Benefit recovery	1,382,162	1,328,862
Sundry Debtors	2,209,597	2,778,323
Finance Leases - principal outstanding	582,455	593,259
Other Debtors	826,467	1,713,766
Prepayments	197,566	479,912
	<u>11,399,886</u>	<u>24,632,350</u>
Less provision for impairment of receivables:		
Collection Fund provisions (WODC share)	(317,514)	(442,293)
Housing Benefit recovery	(1,382,162)	(1,329,591)
Sundry Debtors	(460,298)	(927,160)
	<u>9,239,912</u>	<u>21,933,306</u>

D5. Current Creditors

	2019/20	2020/21
	£	£
Government Departments	(4,843,317)	(11,603,426)
Business Grants Agency	0	(5,707,366)
Other Local Authorities [Statutory]	(2,298,395)	(1,588,658)
Other Local Authorities [Trading]	(367,465)	(2,774,943)
Collection Fund (WODC Share)	(369,120)	(297,588)
Sundry Creditors	(1,877,551)	(3,040,713)
Receipts in advance:		
Taxpayer Creditors	(70,243)	(544,392)
Sundry Creditors receipts in advance	(2,240,891)	(2,538,277)
	<u>(12,066,982)</u>	<u>(28,095,363)</u>
Capital Receipt in Advance	(1,769,356)	(1,693,923)
	<u>(13,836,338)</u>	<u>(29,789,286)</u>

NOTES TO THE BALANCE SHEET

D6. Provisions

	Opening Provision 1 April £	New provisions in-year £	Use of provisions £	Provisions returned to revenue £	Closing Provision 31 March £
-					
Business Rates (NDR) Appeals	(1,139,626)	(243,270)	153,728	0	(1,229,168)
Provision - Subsidence Claims		(30,000)			(30,000)
	(1,139,626)	(273,270)	153,728	0	(1,259,168)

Business Rates (NNDR) appeals

The NNDR provision has been set aside to cover the potential cost to the Council of outstanding appeals against property valuations.

D7. Non - Current Debtors

	31 March 2020 £	31 March 2021 £
Cottsway Housing Association loan	1,998,099	7,821,039
Equity Loans Scheme	232,114	232,114
Parish/Town Council Loans	123,930	145,933
Charge on former Unicorn Public House - Great Rollright	20,498	20,498
GLL - COVID supporting Loans	0	304,301
Vehicles Leases	2,226,895	1,709,262
Southill Solar Loan	500,000	2,540,346
	5,101,536	12,773,493

NOTES TO THE BALANCE SHEET

D8. Capital Expenditure and Financing

The total amount of capital expenditure incurred in the year is shown in the table below, including the value of assets acquired under finance leases, together with the resources that have been used to finance it. Where capital expenditure is to be financed in future years by charges to revenue as assets are used by the Council, the expenditure results in an increase in the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), a measure of the capital expenditure incurred that has yet to be financed.

The net movement in the Capital Financing Requirement illustrates the change in the underlying need for the Council to borrow during the year to fund capital investment, which has not been funded from resources such as grants, capital receipts and direct funding from revenue.

	2019/20	2020/21
	£	£
Opening Capital Financing Requirement	8,621,483	16,395,857
Capital Investment in Year		
Property, Plant & Equipment	6,956,841	477,751
Intangible Assets	0	0
Capital Expenditure transfer Long term loans	2,005,831	7,994,401
Revenue Expenditure Funded from Capital under Statute	2,318,949	4,904,785
	<u>11,281,621</u>	<u>13,376,937</u>
Sources of Finance		
Capital Receipts	458,481	80,000
Government grants & other contributions	2,314,897	4,229,393
MRP / Statutory repayment of loans advance	193,769	941,632
Earmarked reserves	0	613,041
Direct Revenue Contributions	540,100	540,100
	<u>3,507,247</u>	<u>6,404,166</u>
Net Increase / (Decrease) in Capital Financing Requirement	7,774,374	6,972,771
Closing Capital Financing Requirement	16,395,857	23,368,628

NOTES TO THE CASH FLOW STATEMENT

E1. Notes to the Cash Flow Statement

a. Adjustments to the net surplus / (deficit) on the provision of services for non-cash movements

	2019/20 £	2020/21 £
Depreciation, amortisation and impairment	1,586,759	1,827,212
Increase / (decrease) in creditors	1,636,924	12,903,584
(Increase) / decrease in debtors	(4,796,873)	(18,318,748)
Increase / (decrease) in provision for bad debts	186,012	414,291
(Increase) / decrease in inventories	(1,528)	(3,437)
Pensions' liability	2,274,000	(2,900,000)
Carrying amount of non current assets sold	563,844	75,626
Increase / (decrease) in provisions	(601,553)	119,542
Movements in the fair value of investment properties	(62,500)	257,434
Other non cash items charged to Surplus/Deficit on the Provision of Services	(894,234)	(3,264,591)
	(109,149)	(8,889,087)

b. Adjustments for items included in the net surplus / (deficit) on the provision of services that are investing or financing activities

	2019/20 £	2020/21 £
Capital grants and contributions	(4,188,483)	(1,071,603)
Proceeds from the sale of non current assets	(1,034,521)	(75,626)
	(5,223,004)	(1,147,229)

c. Investing Activities

	2019/20 £	2020/21 £
Purchase of property, plant & equipment and other capital investment	(7,066,670)	(311,909)
Purchase of short term and long term investments	(34,482,799)	(57,000,000)
Proceeds from the sale of non current assets	1,124,777	593,259
Proceeds from disposal of short term and long term investments	44,501,421	60,000,000
Other (receipts) / payments from investing activities	5,141,071	3,170,346
	9,217,800	6,451,696

F. Events after the Balance Sheet Date

The Chief Finance Officer authorised the Statement of Accounts on 30th June 2021. Events taking place after this date are not reflected in the financial statements or notes. Where events taking place before this date provided information about conditions existing at 31 March 2021, the figures in the financial statements and notes have been adjusted in all material respects to reflect the impact of this information.

The purchase of The Old Courthouse in Witney, on 21st April 2021 for £1,274,471 has been treated as a non-adjusting event after the Balance Sheet date.

F1. Defined Benefit Pension Scheme

Participation in pension schemes

As part of the terms and conditions of employment of its officers, the Council makes contributions towards the cost of post-employment benefits. Although these benefits will not actually be payable until employees retire, the Council has a commitment to fund (for those benefits) and to disclose them at the time that the employees earn their future entitlement.

The Council participates in two post-employment schemes:

- The Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) is administered locally by Oxfordshire County Council. It is a defined benefit scheme, based upon final salary scheme and length of service upon retirement. The Authority and employees pay contributions into a fund, calculated at a level intended to balance the pensions liabilities with investment assets.
- Arrangements for the award of discretionary post-retirement benefits upon early retirement – this is an unfunded defined benefit arrangement, under which liabilities are recognised when awards are made. However, there are no investment assets built up to meet these pension liabilities, and cash has to be generated to meet actual pension payments if they are deemed due..

Changes to the LGPS came into effect from 1st April 2014. Benefits accrued from this date are based on a career average revalued salary. Various protections will be in place for those members and benefits accrued in the scheme before the changes take effect.

The scheme is a defined benefit statutory scheme that is administered in accordance with the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 1997 (as amended). It is contracted out of the State Second Pension.

Publica Group (Support) Limited

During 2017/18 the Council transferred the majority of its staff under TUPE legislation to Publica Group (Support) Limited, a wholly owned local authority company, limited by guarantee, operating with Mutual Trading Status to deliver services on behalf of the Council. The pension fund disclosure notes on the following pages include the staff transferred to Publica. All staff are pooled (counted as one scheme by the pension fund) as the Council continues to underwrite the pension liabilities on the whole scheme.

ADDITIONAL DISCLOSURES – TECHNICAL NOTES

Transactions relating to retirement benefits

The Council recognises the cost of retirement benefits in the Cost of Services when they are earned by employees, rather than when the benefits are actually paid as pensions. However, the charge the Council makes to council tax is based upon the actual cash payable in the year, so the real cost of retirement benefits is reversed out of the General Fund via the Movement in Reserves Statement (MiRS).

The following transactions have been charged to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure account and General Fund Balance during the year:

	2019/20 £	2020/21 £
Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement		
<i>Cost of Services:</i>		
Current Service Cost	2,120,000	1,871,000
Past Service Cost		
(Gains)/loss from settlements		
<i>Financing and Investment Income & Expenditure:</i>		
Net Interest Expense	979,000	681,000
Net Charge to Surplus or Deficit on Provision of Services	3,099,000	2,552,000
<i>Other post employment benefit charged to Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement</i>		
Remeasurement of the net defined benefit liability comprising:		
Return on Plan Assets	4,389,000	12,101,000
Actuarial (gains) / losses arising on changes in financial assumptions	(9,674,000)	20,408,000
Actuarial gains and losses - demographic assumptions	(3,803,000)	1,084,000
Experience (gains) / losses on defined benefit obligation		
Other actuarial (gains) / losses	(3,810,000)	(909,000)
	(12,898,000)	32,684,000
Total post employment benefits charged to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement	(9,799,000)	35,236,000
Movement in Reserves Statement		
Reversal of net charges made to the Surplus or Deficit on Provision of Services for post employment benefits in accordance with the Code	3,099,000	2,552,000
Actual amount charged against the General Fund Balance for pensions in the year		
Employers' contributions payable to the scheme	825,000	5,452,000

ADDITIONAL DISCLOSURES – TECHNICAL NOTES

Pension Assets and Liabilities recognised in the Balance Sheet

The amount included in the Balance Sheet arising from the Council's obligation in respect of its defined benefit plans is as follows:

	2019/20 £	2020/21 £
Present value of the defined benefit obligation - funded	(81,131,000)	(103,353,000)
Present value of unfunded obligations	(614,000)	(566,000)
Fair Value of Plan Assets	52,324,000	68,916,000
Net liability arising from defined benefit obligation	(29,421,000)	(35,003,000)

Reconciliation of Movements in the Fair Value of Scheme (Plan) Assets

	2019/20 £	2020/21 £
Opening Fair Value of Scheme Assets	56,744,000	52,324,000
Interest Income	1,348,000	1,195,000
Administration Expense		
Remeasurement Gains / (Losses)	(4,389,000)	12,101,000
Other Actuarial gains/losses		
Employers' Contributions [including Unfunded]	825,000	5,452,000
Employee Contributions	352,000	359,000
Benefits Paid [including Unfunded]	(2,556,000)	(2,515,000)
Settlement prices received /paid		
Closing Balance 31 March	52,324,000	68,916,000

Reconciliation of Present Value of the Scheme Liabilities (Defined Benefit Obligation)

	2019/20 £	2020/21 £
Opening Balance 1 April	(96,789,000)	(81,745,000)
Current Service Cost	(2,120,000)	(1,871,000)
Interest Cost	(2,327,000)	(1,876,000)
Contributions from Scheme Participants	(352,000)	(359,000)
Past Service Cost		
Remeasurement Gains / (Losses)	13,484,000	(19,499,000)
Change in demographic assumptions	3,803,000	(1,084,000)
Liabilities assumed/extinguished on settlements	0	0
Benefits Paid	2,512,000	2,474,000
Unfunded Benefits Paid	44,000	41,000
Closing Balance 31 March	(81,745,000)	(103,919,000)
	Funded	(81,131,000)
	Unfunded	(614,000)
		(103,353,000)
		(566,000)

ADDITIONAL DISCLOSURES – TECHNICAL NOTES

Composition of Scheme Assets

	Period ended 31 March 2021			
	Quoted	Unquoted	Total	Percentage of total assets
	£000	£000	£000	%
Equity Securities:				
Consumer				0%
Manufacturing				0%
Energy and Utilities				0%
Financial Institutions				0%
Health and Care				0%
Information technology				0%
Other				0%
Debt Securities:				
Corporate Bonds (investment grade)				0%
Corporate Bonds (non-investment grade)				0%
UK Government	5,636	0.0	5,636	8%
Other	1,774	0.0	1,774	3%
Private Equity:				
All	2,995	0.0	2,995	4%
Real Estate:				
UK Property				0%
Overseas Property				0%
Investment funds and unit trusts:				
Equities		39,547	39,547	57%
Bonds		4,943	4,943	7%
Hedge Funds		0	0	0%
Commodities		0	0	0%
Infrastructure		1,232	1,232	2%
Other		10,269	10,269	15%
Derivatives:				
Inflation				0%
Interest rate				0%
Foreign exchange	78.4		78.4	0%
Other				0%
Cash and cash equivalents				
All	2,441.1		2,441.4	4%
Total	12,925	55,991	68,916	100%

ADDITIONAL DISCLOSURES – UNDERSTANDING THE ACCOUNTS

Basis for estimating assets and liabilities

Liabilities have been assessed on an actuarial basis using the projected unit credit method, as an estimate of the pensions that will be payable in future years dependent on assumptions about mortality rates, salary levels, the financial assumptions are summarised below:

Mortality Assumptions	Males	Females
Current Pensioners	22.4	24.7
Future Pensioners	23.4	26.3
Financial Assumptions	2019/20	2020/21
Rate of increase in pensions	1.90%	2.85%
Rate of increase in salaries	1.90%	2.85%
Discount Rate	2.30%	2.00%

Sensitivity Analysis

IAS 19 requires disclosure of the sensitivity of the results to the methods and assumptions used. The sensitivities regarding the principal assumptions used to measure the scheme liabilities are set out below:

Change in assumption at 31 March 2021:	Approximate % increase to Employer Liability	Approximate monetary amount (£000)
0.5% decrease in Real Discount Rate	9%	9,871
0.5% increase in the Salary increased Rate	1%	1,003
0.5% increase in the Pension increase Rate	8%	8,664

The estimated employer's contributions for the year to 31st March 2022 will be approximately £1,502,000.

ADDITIONAL DISCLOSURES – UNDERSTANDING THE ACCOUNTS

F2. Financial Instruments

Categories of Financial Instruments

The following categories of financial instrument are carried in the Balance Sheet.

2019/2020			2020/2021	
Non-Current £	Current £		Non-Current £	Current £
		Financial Assets at Amortised Cost		
2,601,578	3,062,864	Investments	2,604,019	50,000
2,498,099	4,714,646	Debtors	10,665,686	4,449,777
2,088,606	582,455	Finance Leases	1,709,262	593,259
7,188,283	8,359,965		14,978,967	5,093,036
		Fair Value through Profit or Loss		
10,690,633	44,915	Investments	11,803,332	35,765
	9,883,185	Cash and cash equivalents		9,920,148
10,690,633	9,928,100		11,803,332	9,955,913
		Fair Value through OCI		
980,000	0	Equity Instruments	1,030,000	0
980,000	0		1,030,000	0
18,858,916	18,288,065	Total Financial Assets	27,812,299	15,048,949
		Financial Liabilities at Amortised Cost		
0	(2,245,016)	Creditors		(11,523,022)
0	(2,245,016)	Total Financial Liabilities	0	(11,523,022)

Not all short term debtors and creditors fall within the definition of financial instruments. The difference between the totals shown on the Balance Sheet and the values above is as follows:

	Non Current Debtors	Current Debtors £	Current Creditors £
- Total on Balance Sheet	12,773,493	21,933,306	(28,095,363)
Statutory & Government Debtors / Creditors	(398,545)	(16,410,358)	13,489,672
Prepayments / Receipts in Advance	0	(479,912)	3,082,669
Finance Lease Principal / Liabilities	(1,709,262)	(593,259)	0
Total Financial Instruments	10,665,686	4,449,777	(11,523,022)

ADDITIONAL DISCLOSURES – UNDERSTANDING THE ACCOUNTS

Income, Expense, Gains and Losses

The gains and losses recognised in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in relation to financial instruments consist of the following items:

2019/2020				2020/2021			
Financial Assets			Financial Liabilities	Financial Assets			Financial Liabilities
Loans & Receivables	Available for Sale	Fair Value through OCI	Amortised Cost	Amortised Cost	Fair Value through Profit or Loss	Fair Value through OCI	Amortised Cost
£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
(228,587)	(523,479)	0	0	(396,610)	(381,346)	(16,500)	0
	1,225,438	0	0		(1,112,699)		0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	20,000		0	0	(50,000)	0
(228,587)	701,959	20,000	0	(396,610)	(1,494,045)	(66,500)	0

Fair Values of Financial Assets and Financial Liabilities

Fair Value is defined as “the price that would be received to sell an asset or paid to transfer a liability in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date”.

The Code sets out the fair value valuation hierarchy that local authorities are required to follow to increase consistency and comparability in fair value measurements and disclosures: Level 1 assets are valued based upon ‘quoted prices in active markets for identical assets’ where such assets exist. Level 2 is based upon inputs other than quoted prices within level 1 that are observable. Level 3 represents all other unobservable inputs which can be used to estimate the fair value of the assets.

The fair values have been calculated as follows:

	Input level	As at 31/03/2021 £
-	-	-
<u>Fair Value through Profit or Loss</u>		
Money Market Funds	Level 1	9,920,148
Pooled Investment Funds	Level 1	11,839,097
		21,759,245

ADDITIONAL DISCLOSURES – UNDERSTANDING THE ACCOUNTS

Except for the financial assets carried at fair value (as shown above), all other financial liabilities and financial assets are carried in the Balance Sheet at amortised cost. The carrying value and fair values are shown below for comparison purposes. Fair values are not required for current debtors and creditors (trade payables and receivables) since the carrying amount is deemed a reasonable approximation of fair value.

	2019/20		2020/21	
	Carrying Amount £	Fair Value £	Carrying Amount £	Fair Value £
-				
Financial Assets at Amortised Cost				
Investments	5,664,442	5,664,442	2,654,019	2,654,019
Non-Current Debtors	2,498,099	2,498,099	10,665,686	10,665,686
Non-Current Finance Leases	2,088,606	2,088,606	1,709,262	1,709,262
	10,251,147	10,251,147	15,028,967	15,028,967
Financial Liabilities at Amortised Cost				
Non-Current Finance Leases	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0

Soft Loans

Where loans are advanced at preferential or below market rates they are classed as 'Soft Loans'. The Code of Practice sets out specific accounting and disclosure requirements for soft loans.

Prior to transferring the majority staff to Publica, the Council offered loans at less than market rates to its employees for car purchases. No further loans are being issued to those staff transferred. The outstanding balance of loans is included on the Council balance sheet, within the debtors balances. The value of loans outstanding at the balance sheet date is approximately £5,059 (2019/20 £7,170).

No adjustment has been made to account for the suggested treatment for soft loans (to represent interest lost at granting the loans at below market rate) as the amounts are not material to these accounts.

F3. Nature and extent of risks arising from Financial Instruments

The Council's activities expose it to a variety of financial risks. The Council has not yet required debt financing and currently does not have any external borrowing. As such, the key risks are in relation to its financial assets. These are as follows:

- Credit risk – the possibility that other parties may fail to pay amounts due to the Council.
- Liquidity risk – the possibility that the Council might not have funds available to meet its commitments to make payments
- Re-financing risk – the possibility that the Council might be requiring to renew a financial instrument on maturity at disadvantageous interest rates or terms.
- Market risk – the possibility that financial loss might arise for the Council as a result of changes in such measures as interest rate movements.

Overall procedures for managing risk

The Council's overall risk management procedures focus on the unpredictability of financial markets, and implementing restrictions to minimise these risks. The procedures for risk management are set out through a legal framework set out in the Local Government Act 2003 and the associated regulations. These require the Council to comply with the CIPFA Prudential Code, the CIPFA Treasury Management in the Public Services Code of Practice and Investment Guidance issued through the Act. Overall these procedures require the Council to manage risk in the following ways:

- By formally adopting the requirements of the CIPFA code of Practice for Treasury Management Services
- By approving annually in advance prudential indicators for the following three years limiting:
 - * Limits on the Council's overall debt [external borrowing]
 - * The Council's maturity structure of its external borrowing [currently £0]
 - * The Council's upper limit for exposure to fixed and variable rate investments
 - * The maximum exposure to investments maturing beyond a year
- By annually approving a Treasury Management Investment Strategy for the forthcoming year, setting out criteria for investments and specifying the minimum requirements for all counterparties

These are required to be reported and approved at or before the Authority's annual Council Tax setting budget. These items are reported with the annual treasury management strategy which outlines the detailed approach to managing risk in relation to the Council's financial instrument exposure. Actual performance is reported annually to Members.

The Council has adopted CIPFA's Code of Practice on Treasury Management (and subsequent amendments) and complies with The Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities.

As part of the adoption of the Treasury Management Code, the Council approves a Treasury Management Strategy before the commencement of each financial year. The Strategy sets out the parameters for the management of risks associated with Financial Instruments. The Council also produces Treasury Management Practices specifying the practical arrangements to be followed to manage these risks.

The Treasury Management Strategy includes an Annual Investment Strategy in compliance with the MHCLG's Investment Guidance for local authorities. This Guidance emphasises that priority is to be given to security and liquidity, rather than yield. The Council's Treasury Strategy, together with its Treasury Management Practices are based on seeking the highest rate of return consistent with the proper levels of security and liquidity.

These policies are implemented by a central treasury team. The Council maintains written principles for overall risk management, as well as written policies covering specific areas, such as interest rate risk, credit risk, and the investment of surplus cash through Treasury Management Practices.

ADDITIONAL DISCLOSURES – UNDERSTANDING THE ACCOUNTS

Credit Risk

The Council manages credit risk by ensuring that investments are placed with the Debt Management Office, other local authorities, AAA-rated money market funds and Banks and Building Societies of sufficiently high credit quality as set out in the Treasury Management Strategy. A limit of £6m of the total portfolio is placed on the amount of money that can be invested with a single counterparty. The Council also sets a total group investment limit for institutions that are part of the same banking group. No more than £22m in total can be invested for a period longer than one year.

It must also be noted that although credit ratings remain a key source of information, the Council recognises that they have limitations and investment decisions are based on a range of market intelligence. All investments have been made in line with the Council's Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2020/21, approved by Full Council in February 2020.

The ratings of the financial institutions holding Council investments (and investments classified as cash equivalents) at the Balance Sheet date is as follows:

	Investment Balance (£)
<u>Fixed duration deals</u>	
Banks - Fitch rating F1	
Local Authorities	
Bonds	2,604,019
<u>Call accounts and other 'cash equivalent' investments</u>	
Money Market Funds	9,920,148
<u>Pooled funds</u>	
Non-rating agency rated pooled fund <i>separately approved by the Council's Treasury Management advisors</i>	11,839,097

The table below summaries the nominal value of the Council's investment portfolio at 31st March 2021 and confirms that all investments were made in line with the Council's approved credit rating criteria at the time of placing the investment:

	Investment values - maturing within:			
	0-3 mths	3-6 mths	6-12 mths	1 year +
	£	£	£	£
<u>Internally managed funds</u>				
Call Accounts	6,000,123	-	-	
UK Banks				50,000
Money Market Funds	3,920,025			
UK Building Societies				
REIT	1,030,000			
Bonds				2,604,019
<u>Externally managed funds</u>				
Pooled Funds	11,839,097	-	-	

The credit quality of debtors is reflected in the level of impairment allowance for trade debtors shown in note D4.

Liquidity Risk

ADDITIONAL DISCLOSURES – UNDERSTANDING THE ACCOUNTS

The Council has a comprehensive cash flow management system that seeks to ensure that cash is available as needed. If unexpected movements happen, the Authority has access to borrowing facilities via the Public Works Loan Board, commercial banks, bond issues, medium term notes, tax increment financing, the European Investment Bank, and other local authorities. There is no perceived risk that the Authority will be unable to raise finance to meet its commitments.

The Council also has to manage the risk so that it will not be exposed to replenishing a significant proportion of its borrowing at a time of unfavourable interest rates. The Authority would only borrow in advance of need where there is a clear business case for doing so and will only do so for the current capital programme or to finance future debt maturities.

Market Risk – interest rate risk

The Council is exposed to risks arising from movements in interest rates. The Treasury Management Strategy aims to mitigate these risks by setting an upper limit of 50% of external debt that can be subject to variable interest rates. It should be noted that 50% is a maximum proportion, but this is a reflection of the Council's debt-free status and current minimal requirements to borrow.

Investments are also subject to movements in interest rates. As investments are made at fixed rates, but for shorter periods of time, there is greater exposure to interest rate movements. This risk has to be balanced against actions taken to mitigate credit risk.

Price Risk

The Council holds some financial instruments, of which the capital value may fluctuate as a result of market conditions. However, these instruments are all purchased on a hold to maturity or long term basis and therefore any temporary fluctuations in the market value of such products would have no impact on the Council's finances.

F4. Leases

The Council as Lessee [obtaining assets under a leasing arrangement]

Operating Leases

The Council has entered into a number of operating leases in the local area. The minimum lease payments due under non-cancellable leases in future years are as below:

	31 March 2020 £	31 March 2021 £
Not later than one year	233,316	230,259
Later than one year & not later than five years	833,163	688,283
Later than five years	490,190	426,250
	1,556,669	1,344,792

ADDITIONAL DISCLOSURES – UNDERSTANDING THE ACCOUNTS

The Council as Lessor [leasing assets out]

Finance Leases

The Council leases a number of waste and recycling vehicles to Ubico Limited.

The minimum lease payments comprise settlement of the long-term debtor for the interest in the asset and finance income that will be earned by the Council for the period while the debt remains outstanding.

	31 March 2020 £	31 March 2021 £
Present value of principal payments outstanding on non current assets	2,564,823	2,226,895
Unearned finance income	162,278	112,127
	2,727,101	2,339,022

The gross investment in the lease and the minimum lease payments will be received over the following periods:

	Gross Investment in the Lease		Minimum Lease Payments (excl. int)	
	31 March 2020 £	31 March 2021 £	31 March 2020 £	31 March 2021 £
	-			
Not later than one year	635,977	636,715	582,455	593,259
Later than one year & not later than five years	2,193,011	1,767,131	2,088,606	1,698,459
Later than five years	142,642	10,804	138,290	10,803
	2,971,630	2,414,650	2,809,351	2,302,521

The Council has not included any allowance for uncollectable debts in the table above. Any outstanding debts would be considered within the Sundry Debtors bad-debt provision calculation.

Operating Leases

The Council leases out a number of premises within the local area. The future minimum lease payments receivable under non – cancellable leases in future years are:

	31 March 2020 £	31 March 2021 £
Not later than one year	3,875,893	4,303,483
Later than one year & not later than five years	12,164,086	12,291,450
Later than five years	51,116,462	48,274,970
	67,156,441	64,869,903

The minimum lease payments receivable do not include rents that are contingent on events taking place after the balance sheet date.

F5. Accounting Policies

i) General Principles

The Statement of Accounts summarises the Council's transactions for the financial year and its position at the 31st March year-end. The Council is required to prepare an annual Statement of Accounts by the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015, those regulations which require the accounts to be prepared in accordance with proper accounting practices. These practices primarily comprise the *Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom* supported by International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS).

The accounting convention adopted in the Statement of Accounts is principally historical cost, modified by the revaluation of certain categories of non-current assets and financial instruments.

These accounts have been prepared on the basis that the Council is a going concern.

ii) Accruals of Income and Expenditure

Activity is accounted for in the year it takes place, not when physical cash payments are made or received. In particular:

- Revenue from the sale of goods is recognised when the Council transfers the significant risks and rewards of ownership to the purchaser and it is probable that economic benefits or service potential associated with the transaction will flow to the Authority.
- Revenue from the provision of services is recognised when the Council can measure reliably the percentage of completion of the transaction and it is probable that economic benefits or service potential associated with the transaction will flow to the Authority.
- Supplies are recorded as expenditure when they are consumed - where there is a gap between the date supplies are received and their consumption they are carried as inventories [stock] on the Balance Sheet, where the value is material.
- Expenses in relation to services received (including services provided by employees) are recorded as expenditure when the services are received rather than when payments are made.
- Interest receivable on investments is accounted for respectively as income and expenditure on the basis of the effective interest rate for the relevant financial instrument ('what is due') rather than the cash flows fixed or determined by the contract.
- Where revenue and expenditure have been recognised but cash has not been received or paid, a debtor or creditor for the relevant amount is recorded in the Balance Sheet. For all debts outstanding at the balance sheet date the balance of debtors is written down and a charge made to revenue for the income that might not be collected (doubtful debts).
- A deminimus of £500 is generally applied to Accruals

iii) Cash and Cash Equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents are represented by cash in hand and deposits with financial institutions repayable, without penalty, on notice of not more than 24 hours. This includes bank call-accounts, Money Market Funds (MMF) and any other 'overnight-type' investments.

iv) Charges to Revenue for Non-Current Assets

Services, support services and trading accounts are debited with the following amounts to record the cost of holding fixed assets during the year:

- depreciation attributable to the assets used by the relevant service
- revaluation and impairment losses on assets used by the services where there are no accumulated gains in the Revaluation Reserve against which the losses can be written off
- amortisation of intangible fixed assets attributable to the service

ADDITIONAL DISCLOSURES – UNDERSTANDING THE ACCOUNTS

The Council is not required to raise council tax to fund depreciation, revaluation and impairment losses or amortisations. However, it is required to make an annual contribution from revenue towards the reduction in its overall borrowing requirement equal to an amount calculated on a prudent basis determined by the Council in accordance with statutory guidance. Depreciation, revaluation and impairment losses and amortisations are therefore replaced by the contribution in the General Fund Balance - Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP), by way of an adjusting transaction with the Capital Adjustment Account in the Movement in Reserves Statement for the difference between the two.

v) Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates (England)

Billing authorities act as agents, collecting council tax and non-domestic rates (NDR) on behalf of the major preceptors (including government for NDR) and, as principals, collecting council tax and NDR for themselves. Billing authorities are required by statute to maintain a separate fund (i.e. the Collection Fund) for the collection and distribution of amounts due in respect of council tax and NDR. Under the legislative framework for the Collection Fund, billing authorities, major preceptors and central government share proportionately the risks and rewards that the amount of council tax and NDR collected could be less or more than predicted.

Accounting for Council Tax and NDR

The council tax and NDR income included in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement is the authority's share of accrued income for the year. However, regulations determine the amount of council tax and NDR that must be included in the authority's General Fund. Therefore, the difference between the income included in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and the amount required by regulation to be credited to the General Fund is taken to the Collection Fund Adjustment Account and included as a reconciling item in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

The Balance Sheet includes the authority's share of the end of year balances in respect of council tax and NDR relating to arrears, impairment allowances for doubtful debts, overpayments and prepayments and appeals.

vi) Employee Benefits

Benefits payable during employment

Short-term employee benefits are those due to be settled within 12 months of the year-end. They include such benefits as wages and salaries, paid annual leave and paid sick leave, bonuses and non-monetary benefits (eg cars) for current employees and are recognised as an expense for services in the year in which employees render service to the Council. An accrual is made for the cost of holiday entitlement (or any form of leave, eg time off in lieu) earned by employees but not taken before the year-end which employees can carry forward into the next financial year. The accrual is made at the wage and salary rates applicable in the following accounting year, being the period in which the employee takes the benefit. The accrual is charged to Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services, but then reversed out through the Movement in Reserves Statement so that holiday benefits are charged to revenue in the financial year in which the holiday absence occurs.

Overtime is only paid on limited occasions and requires prior Head of Service approval. Overtime is not contractual or regular, and therefore any holiday leave potentially accruing on overtime worked is not significant. The Council does not accrue for holiday pay due on overtime.

Termination benefits

Termination benefits are amounts payable as a result of decisions by the Council to terminate an officer's employment before the normal retirement date or an officer's decision to accept voluntary redundancy, and are charged on an accruals basis to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement when the Authority is demonstrably committed to the termination of the employment of an officer or group of officers or making an offer to encourage voluntary redundancy.

Where termination benefits involve the enhancement of pensions, statutory provisions require the General Fund Balance to be charged with the amount payable by the Authority to the pension fund or the employee in the year, not the amount calculated according to the relevant accounting standards.

vii) Post-employment Benefits

Employees of the Council are permitted to join of the Local Government Pension Scheme, administered by Oxfordshire County Council. This scheme provides defined benefits to members (retirement lump sums and pensions), earned as employees worked for the Council.

ADDITIONAL DISCLOSURES – UNDERSTANDING THE ACCOUNTS

The Local Government Pension Scheme

The Local Government Pension Scheme is accounted for as a defined benefits scheme:

- The liabilities of the Oxfordshire County Council pension fund attributable to the Council are included in the Balance Sheet on an actuarial basis using the projected unit method – i.e. an assessment of the future payments that will be made in relation to retirement benefits earned to date by employees, based on assumptions about mortality rates, employee turnover rates, etc., and projections of future earnings for current employees.
- Liabilities are discounted to their value at current prices, using a discount rate based on the gross redemption yield on the Iboxx Sterling Corporate Index, AA over 15 years, at the IAS19 valuation date. This is a high quality corporate bond of equivalent term and currency to the liability.
- The assets of the Oxfordshire County Council pension fund attributable to the Council are included in the balance sheet at their fair value.
 - * quoted securities – current bid price
 - * unquoted securities – professional estimate
 - * unitised securities – current bid price
 - * property – market value

In relation to retirement benefits, statutory provisions require the General Fund balance to be charged with the amount payable by the Council to the pension fund or directly to pensioners in the year, not the amount calculated according to the relevant accounting standards. In the Movement in Reserves Statement, this means that there are transfers to and from the Pension Reserve to remove the notional debits and credits for retirement benefits and replace them with debits for the cash paid to the pension fund and pensioners and any such amounts payable but unpaid at the year-end. The negative balance that arises on the Pensions Reserve thereby measures the beneficial impact to the General Fund of being required to account for retirement benefits on the basis of cash flows rather than as benefits are earned by employees.

Discretionary Benefits

The Council also has restricted powers to make discretionary awards of retirement benefits in the event of early retirements. Any liabilities estimated to arise as a result of an award to any member of staff are accrued in the year of the decision to make the award and accounted for using the same policies as are applied to the Local Government Pension Scheme.

viii) Fair Value Measurement

The Council measures some of its non-financial assets such as surplus assets and investment properties and some of its financial instruments such as equity shareholdings [other financial instruments as applicable] at fair value at each reporting date. Fair value is the price that would be received on the sale of an asset or paid to transfer a liability in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date. The fair value measurement assumes that the transaction to sell the asset or transfer the liability takes place either:

- in the principal market for the asset or liability, or
- in the absence of a principal market, in the most advantageous market for the asset or liability

The Council measures the fair value of an asset or liability using the assumptions that market participants would use when pricing the asset or liability, assuming that market participants act in their economic best interest.

When measuring the fair value of a non-financial asset, the Council takes into account a market participant's ability to generate economic benefits by using the asset in its highest and best use or by selling it to another market participant that would use the asset in its highest and best use.

The Council uses valuation techniques that are appropriate in the circumstances and for which sufficient data is available, maximising the use of relevant observable inputs and minimising the use of unobservable inputs.

ADDITIONAL DISCLOSURES – UNDERSTANDING THE ACCOUNTS

Inputs to the valuation techniques in respect of assets and liabilities for which fair value is measured or disclosed in the authority's financial statements are categorised within the fair value hierarchy, as follows:

- Level 1 – quoted prices (unadjusted) in active markets for identical assets or liabilities that the authority can access at the measurement date
- Level 2 – inputs other than quoted prices included within Level 1 that are observable for the asset or liability, either directly or indirectly
- Level 3 – unobservable inputs for the asset or liability.

ix) Financial Instruments

Financial liabilities are recognised on the Balance Sheet when the authority becomes a party to the contractual provisions of a financial instrument and are initially measured at fair value and carried at their amortised cost. Annual charges to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement for interest payable are based on the carrying amount of the liability, multiplied by the effective rate of interest for the instrument. The effective interest rate is the rate that exactly discounts estimated future cash payments over the life of the instrument to the amount at which it was originally recognised.

Any borrowing that the Authority may undertake would be presented in the Balance Sheet at the outstanding principal repayable (plus accrued interest); and interest charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement is the amount payable for the year according to the loan agreement.

Where premiums and discounts have been charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, regulations allow the impact on the General Fund Balance to be spread over future years. The Council has a policy of spreading the gain or loss over the term that was remaining on the loan against which the premium was payable or discount receivable when it was repaid, where material. The reconciliation of amounts charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement to the net charge required against the General Fund Balance is managed by a transfer to or from the Financial Instruments Adjustment Account in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

Financial assets are classified based on a principles based classification and measurement approach that reflects the business model for holding the assets (i.e. why we are holding the asset) and the characteristics of the cashflows. There are three main classifications:

- Amortised cost
- Fair value through profit or loss (FVPL), and
- Fair value through other comprehensive income (FVOCI)

Financial Assets at Amortised Cost

Financial assets measured at amortised cost are recognised on the Balance Sheet when the Council becomes a party to the contractual provisions of a financial instrument and are initially measured at fair value. They are subsequently measured at their amortised cost. Annual credits to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement for interest receivable are based on the carrying amount of the asset multiplied by the effective rate of interest for the instrument.

Expected Credit Loss Model

The Council recognises material expected credit losses on its financial assets held at amortised cost, either on a 12-month or lifetime basis except for those where the counterparty is central government or another local authority, where relevant statutory provisions prevent default. The expected credit loss model also applies to lease receivables and contract assets. Only lifetime losses are recognised for trade receivables (debtors).

Impairment losses are calculated to reflect the expectation that the future cash flows might not take place because the borrower could default on their obligations. Where credit risk has increased significantly since an instrument was initially recognised, losses are assessed on a lifetime basis. Where risk has not increased significantly or remains low, losses are assessed on the basis of 12-month expected losses.

ADDITIONAL DISCLOSURES – UNDERSTANDING THE ACCOUNTS

Financial Assets at Fair Value through Profit or Loss

Financial assets measured at fair value through profit or loss are recognised on the Balance Sheet when the Council becomes a party to the contractual provisions of a financial instrument and are initially measured and carried at fair value. Fair value gains and losses are recognised as they arrive in the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services.

Fair value is measured in accordance with the Council's Fair Value Measurements policy (see viii above).

Any gains and losses that arise on the derecognition of the asset are credited or debited to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

The Council has chosen to apply statutory provisions for mitigating the impact of fair value movements on Pooled Investment Funds as directed in the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2018 [SI 2018/1207]. This allows (where relevant criteria are met) for fair value gains and losses on Pooled Investment Funds to be reversed to an account established solely for the purpose of recognising fair value gains and losses – the Pooled Investment Funds Adjustment Account.

This statutory provision applies to the 2020/21 accounts and ceases on 31 March 2023.

x) Government Grants and Contributions (updated)

Whether paid on account, by instalments or in arrears, government grants and third party contributions and donations are recognised as due to the Authority when there is assurance that:

- the Council will comply with the conditions attached to the payments, and
- the grants or contributions will be received.

Amounts recognised as due to the Council are not credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement until conditions attached to the grant or contributions have been satisfied. Conditions are stipulations that specify that the future economic benefits or service potential embodied in the asset acquired using grant or contribution are required to be consumed by the recipient as specified, or future economic benefits or service potential must be returned to the transferor.

Monies advanced as grants and contributions for which conditions have not been satisfied are carried in the Balance Sheet as creditors. When conditions are satisfied, the grant or contribution is only then credited to Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

Where capital grants are credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, they are reversed out of the General Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement. Where the grant has yet to be used to finance capital expenditure, it is posted to the Capital Grants Unapplied reserve. Where it has been applied, it is posted to the Capital Adjustment Account. Amounts in the Capital Grants Unapplied reserve are transferred to the Capital Adjustment Account once they have been applied to fund capital expenditure.

Community Infrastructure Levy

The authority has elected to charge a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). The levy will be charged on new builds (chargeable developments for the authority) with appropriate planning consent. The council charges for and collects the levy, which is a planning charge. The income from the levy will be used to fund a number of infrastructure projects (these include transport, flood defences and schools) to support the development of the area.

CIL is received without outstanding conditions; it is therefore recognised at the commencement date of the chargeable development in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in accordance with the accounting policy for government grants and contributions set out above. CIL charges will be largely used to fund capital expenditure. However a proportion of the charges for this authority may be used to fund revenue expenditure. A share of the charges which are due to be payable to the Town and Parish Councils will remain in creditors (receipts in advance) until due.

xi) Inventories and Long Term Contracts

Inventories [stocks] are included in the Balance Sheet at cost.

Long term contracts are accounted for on the basis of charging the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services with the value of works and services received under the contract during the financial year.

xii) Investment Property

Investment properties are those that are used solely to earn rentals and/or for capital appreciation. The definition is not met if the property is used in any way to facilitate the delivery of services or production of goods or if is classified as held for sale.

Investment properties are measured initially at cost and subsequently at 'highest and best' valuation method. Properties are not depreciated but are subject to a review at year end to determine whether market conditions require properties to be revalued. Any gains or losses on revaluation are posted to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. The same treatment is applied to gains and losses on disposal.

Rentals received in relation to investment properties are credited to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line and result in a gain for the General Fund Balance. However, revaluation and disposal gains and losses are not permitted by statutory arrangements to have an impact on the General Fund Balance. The gains and losses are therefore reversed out of the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement and posted to the Capital Adjustment Account or (for any sale proceeds greater than £10,000) the Capital Receipts Reserve.

xiii) Leases

Leases are classified as finance leases when the terms of the lease transfer substantially all the risks and rewards incidental to ownership of the property, plant or equipment from the lessor to the lessee. All other leases are classified as operating leases.

Where a lease covers both land and buildings, the land and building elements are considered separately for classification.

Arrangements that do not have the legal status of a lease but convey a right to use an asset in return for payment are accounted for under this policy where fulfilment of the arrangement is dependent on the use of specific assets.

The Council as Lessee

Finance leases

Property, plant and equipment held under a finance lease is recognised on the Balance Sheet at the commencement of the lease at its fair value, measured at the lease's inception (or the present value of the minimum lease payments, if lower). The asset recognised is matched by a liability for the obligation to pay the lessor. Initial direct costs of the authority may be added to the carrying amount of the asset. Premiums paid on entry into a lease are applied to writing down the lease liability.

Lease payments are apportioned between:

- a charge for the acquisition of the interest in the asset – applied to write down the lease liability, and
- a finance charge (debited to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement).

Property, plant and equipment recognised under finance leases is accounted for using the policies applied generally to such assets, subject to depreciation being charged over the lease term if this is shorter than the asset's estimated useful life (where ownership of the asset does not transfer to the Council at the end of the lease period).

ADDITIONAL DISCLOSURES – UNDERSTANDING THE ACCOUNTS

The Council is not required to raise council tax to cover depreciation or revaluation and impairment losses arising on leased assets. Instead, a prudent annual contribution is made from revenue funds towards the deemed capital investment in Accordance with statutory requirements. Depreciation and revaluation and impairment losses are therefore substituted by a revenue contribution in the General Fund Balance, by way of an adjusting transaction with the Capital Adjustment Account in the Movement in Reserves Statement for the difference between the two.

Operating leases

Lease payments made under operating leases are charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as an expense of the services benefiting from use of the leased asset.

The Council as Lessor

Finance leases

Where the Council grants a finance lease over a property or an item of plant or equipment, the relevant asset is written out of the Balance Sheet as a disposal.

Lease rentals receivable are apportioned between:

- a charge for the acquisition of the interest in the property – applied to write down the lease debtor (together with any premiums received), and
- finance income (credited to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement).

Any gain credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement on disposal is not permitted by statute to increase the General Fund Balance and is required to be treated as a capital receipt. Where a premium has been received, this is posted out of the General Fund Balance to the Capital Receipts Reserve in the Movement on Reserves Statement. Where the amount due in relation to the lease asset is to be settled by the payment of rentals in future financial years, this is posted out of the General Fund Balance to the Deferred Capital Receipts Reserve. When the future rentals are received, the element for the capital receipt for the disposal of the asset is used to write down the lease debtor. At this point, the deferred capital receipts are transferred to the Capital Receipts Reserve.

The written-off value of disposals is not a charge against council tax, as the cost of fixed assets is fully provided for under separate arrangements for capital financing. Amounts are therefore appropriated to the Capital Adjustment Account from the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

Operating leases

Where the Council grants an operating lease over a property or an item of plant or equipment, the asset is retained in the Balance Sheet. Rental income is credited to the "Other Operating Expenditure" line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. Credits are made on a straight-line basis over the life of the lease even if this does not match the pattern of payments (e.g. there is a premium paid at the commencement of the lease). Initial direct costs incurred in negotiating and arranging the lease are added to the carrying amount of the relevant asset (if material) and charged as an expense over the lease term on the same basis as rental income.

xiv) Property, Plant and Equipment

Assets that have physical substance and are held for use in the production or supply of goods or services, for rental to others, or for administrative purposes and that are expected to be used during more than one financial year are classified as Property, Plant and Equipment.

Recognition

Expenditure on the acquisition, creation or enhancement of Property, Plant and Equipment is capitalised on an accruals basis, provided that it is probable that the future economic benefits or service potential associated with the item will flow to the Authority and the cost of the item can be measured reliably. Expenditure that maintains but does not add to an asset's potential to deliver future economic benefits or service potential (e.g. repairs and maintenance) is charged as an expense when it is incurred.

The Council's capitalisation de minimis is £10,000, except for where the sum of a group of assets is significant, such as waste collection bins and boxes or ICT equipment.

ADDITIONAL DISCLOSURES – UNDERSTANDING THE ACCOUNTS

Measurement

Assets are initially measured at cost, comprising:

- the purchase price
- any costs directly attributable to bringing the asset to the location and condition necessary for it to be capable of operating in the manner intended by management.

The 'cost' of an asset acquired other than by purchase is deemed to be its fair value, unless the acquisition was for no monetary value. Where the purchase of an asset is acquired via an exchange, the cost of the acquisition is the carrying amount of the asset given up by the Authority.

Assets are carried in the Balance sheet using the following measurement bases:

- infrastructure, community assets and assets under construction – depreciated historical cost
- Surplus assets – “highest and best use”
- all other classes of asset – “current value”, determined as the amount that would be paid for the asset in its existing use (existing use value – EUV).

Where there is no market-based evidence of 'current value' because of the specialist nature of an asset, depreciated replacement cost (DRC) is used as an estimate of current value”.

Items of equipment, which have short useful lives or low values (or both) are held on the balance sheet at depreciated historical cost, as an approximation of current value.

Assets included in the balance sheet at current value are revalued to ensure that their carrying amount is not materially different from their value at year-end. All land and buildings are revalued at least every 5-years as part of a rolling programme. Increases in valuations are matched by credits to the Revaluation Reserve to recognise unrealised gains. Exceptionally, gains might be credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement where they arise from the reversal of a loss previously charged to a service.

Where items or property plant and equipment are revalued, and the valuers identifies an asset which has component parts that have significantly different useful lives, where one or more parts represent a significant proportion of the overall asset, then the asset may be componentised. With componentisation, one or more constituent parts may be identified, and the component parts separately valued for the accounts and depreciated over different useful lives to the main asset. Useful economic lives (and therefore depreciation calculations) will be based upon the asset lives recommended by the Council's valuers.

Upon revaluation, where decreases in value are identified, they are accounted for by:

- where there is a balance of revaluation gains for the asset in the Revaluation Reserve, the carrying amount of the asset is written down against that balance (up to the amount of the accumulated gain)
- where there is no balance in the Revaluation Reserve or an insufficient balance, the carrying amount of the asset is written down against the relevant service line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

The Revaluation Reserve contains revaluation gains recognised since 1 April 2007, the date of its formal implementation. Gains arising before that date have been consolidated into the Capital Adjustment Account.

Impairment

Assets are assessed at each year-end as to whether there is any indication that an asset may be impaired. Where indications exist and any possible differences are estimated to be material, the recoverable amount of the asset is estimated and, where this is less than the carrying amount of the asset, an impairment loss is recognised for the shortfall.

Where impairment losses are identified, they are accounted for by:

- where there is a balance of revaluation gains for the asset in the Revaluation Reserve, the carrying amount of the asset is written down against that balance (up to the amount of the accumulated gains)
- where there is no balance in the Revaluation Reserve or an insufficient balance, the carrying amount of the asset is written down against the relevant service line(s) in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

ADDITIONAL DISCLOSURES – UNDERSTANDING THE ACCOUNTS

Where an impairment loss is reversed subsequently, the reversal is credited to the relevant service line(s) in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement up to the amount of the original loss, adjusted for depreciation that would have been charged if the loss had not been recognised.

Depreciation

Depreciation is provided for on all Property, Plant and Equipment assets. Assets are written-down over the useful life of the asset. An exception is made for assets without a determinable finite useful life (ie freehold land and certain Community Assets) and assets that are under construction (and not yet available for use).

Depreciation is calculated on the following bases:

- Operational buildings and surplus property – depreciated on a straight-line basis, over a 30 to 60 year useful lives, depending upon the particular asset and an estimate of the asset life from the Council's valuer
- Car Park depreciable components (surface) – 20 years
- Land is not depreciated
- Vehicles, plant, furniture and equipment – depreciated on a straight-line basis, over a 5-year period
- Investment property is not depreciated
- Infrastructure Assets are depreciated over a period of up to 25 years, depending upon the particular asset and as estimate of the asset life from the Council's valuer.

Where an item of Property, Plant and Equipment asset has major components whose cost is significant in relation to the total cost of the item, the components are depreciated separately.

Revaluation gains are also depreciated, with an amount equal to the difference between current value depreciation charged on assets and the depreciation that would have been chargeable based on their historical cost being transferred each year from the Revaluation Reserve to the Capital Adjustment Account.

Disposals and non-current assets held for sale

When it becomes probable that the carrying amount of an asset will be recovered principally through a sale transaction rather than through its continuing use, it is reclassified as an Asset Held for Sale. The asset is revalued immediately before reclassification and then carried at the lower of this amount and current value less costs to sell.

If assets no longer meet the criteria to be classified as Assets Held for Sale, it will be reclassified back to non-current assets and valued at the lower of their carrying amount before being classified as held for sale, adjusted for depreciation, amortisation or revaluations that would have been recognised had they not been classified as Held for Sale, and their recoverable amount at the date of the decision not to sell.

Assets that are to be abandoned or scrapped are not reclassified as Assets Held for Sale.

When an asset is disposed of or decommissioned, the carrying amount of the asset in the Balance Sheet is written off to the Other Operating Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as part of the gain or loss on disposal. Receipts from disposals (if any) are credited to the same line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement also as part of the gain or loss on disposal (ie netted off against the carrying value of the asset at the time of disposal). Any accumulated revaluation gains held for the asset in the Revaluation Reserve are transferred to the Capital Adjustment Account.

Amounts received for disposal in excess of £10,000 are categorised as capital receipts.

xv) Provisions, Contingent Liabilities and Contingent Assets

Provisions

Provisions are made where an event has taken place that gives the Council a legal or constructive obligation that probably requires settlement by a transfer of economic benefits or service potential, and a reliable estimate can be made of the amount of the obligation.

Provisions are charged as an expense to the appropriate service line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in the year that the Council becomes aware of the obligation, and are measured at the

ADDITIONAL DISCLOSURES – UNDERSTANDING THE ACCOUNTS

best estimate at the balance sheet date of the expenditure required to settle the obligation, taking into account relevant risks and certainties.

When payments are eventually made, they are charged to the provision carried in the Balance Sheet. Estimated settlements are reviewed at the end of each financial year – where it becomes less than probable that a transfer of economic benefits will now be required (or a lower settlement than anticipated is made), the provision is reversed and credited back to the relevant service.

Where some or all of the payment required to settle a provision is expected to be recovered (e.g. from an insurance claim), this is only recognised as income for the relevant service if it is virtually certain that reimbursement will be received if the Authority settles the obligation.

Contingent Liabilities

A contingent liability arises where an event has taken place that gives the Council a possible obligation whose existence will only be confirmed by the occurrence or otherwise of uncertain future events not wholly within the control of the authority. Contingent liabilities also arise in circumstances where a provision would otherwise be made but either it is not probable that an outflow of resources will be required or the amount of the obligation cannot be measured reliably.

Any material contingent liabilities are disclosed in the notes to the accounts.

Contingent Assets

A contingent asset arises where an event has taken place that gives the authority a possible asset whose existence will only be confirmed by the occurrence or otherwise of uncertain future events not wholly within the control of the Authority.

Contingent assets are not recognised in the Balance Sheet but disclosed in the notes to the accounts where it is probable that there will be an inflow of economic benefits or service potential.

xvi) Reserves

The Council sets aside specific amounts as reserves for future policy purposes or to cover contingencies. Reserves are created by appropriating amounts out of the General Fund Balance, via the Movement in Reserves Statement. When expenditure to be financed from a reserve is incurred, it is charged to the appropriate service in that year to score against the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. The reserve is then charged back into the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement so that there is no net charge against council tax for the expenditure.

Certain reserves are kept to manage the accounting processes for non-current assets, financial instruments, and retirement & employee benefits and do not represent usable resources for the Authority – these reserves are explained in the relevant policies.

xvii) Revenue Expenditure Funded from Capital Under Statute

Expenditure incurred during the year that may be capitalised under statutory provisions but that does not result in the creation of a non-current asset is charged as expenditure to the relevant service in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in the year. Where the Council has determined to meet the cost of this expenditure from existing capital resources, or by borrowing, a transfer in the Movement in Reserves Statement from the General Fund Balance to the Capital Adjustment Account to reverse out the amounts charged so there is no impact on the level of council tax.

xviii) Value Added Tax

VAT payable is included as an expense only to the extent that it is not recoverable from Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC). VAT receivable is excluded from income.

ADDITIONAL DISCLOSURES – UNDERSTANDING THE ACCOUNTS

F6. Critical Judgements in Applying Accounting Policies

In applying the accounting policies set out in Note F5 above, the Council has had to make certain judgements about complex transactions or those involving uncertainty about future events. The critical judgements made in the Statement of Accounts are:

- The Council has a one-seventh share in Ubico Limited. The company provides a range of integrated environmental services including, commercial refuse collection and grounds maintenance services on behalf of the Council. The separate operating practices, management structure and the application of majority-voting on the Ubico Limited board do not constitute the Council having joint-control or significant influence over the company. The Council's interest has therefore been classified as an investment in Ubico and group accounts have not been prepared.
- The Council jointly owns (with Cotswold District Council, the Forest of Dean District Council and Cheltenham Borough Council) Publica Group (Support) Limited, a wholly owned company, limited by guarantee, operating with Mutual Trading Status to deliver services on behalf of the Council and services to other members Councils under contract. Publica can be considered to be merely an employment vehicle (in accounting terms only a 'holding account'), employing and paying staff and then recharging these costs to the Councils, via a contract sum. It does not trade and does not make a 'profit' as substantially all surpluses are redistributed back to the councils. While the Council has an interest in the Company, the Council's share of any surplus for the year and net assets at the balance sheet date have not been consolidated into the Council's single entity accounts. It is the view of management that the figures involved are not material and the production of group accounts will not enhance disclosure or provide any additional benefit to the reader of the accounts, and on that basis Group Accounts have not been prepared.
- No allowance has been made in the Councils' accounts for the transfer out of any Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) pension liability to Publica Group (Support) Limited. The service contract and tripartite agreement between the Council, Oxfordshire Pension Fund and Publica Group (Support) Limited mean that the pension liability and risk relating to the pension fund remains with the Council, following the TUPE transfer of the majority of the Council's staff to Publica on 1st November 2017. Therefore the Council is reporting the pension liability for both staff transferred to Publica, and the Councils retained staff, in the accounts. Although Publica, as the employer of many of the current staff may be initially responsible for paying any exit contributions (for example), for any of its staff that are members of the LGPS, such cost will be reimbursed by the relevant Council. The accounts have been prepared on the basis that the full pension fund liability for the LGPS sits in the Council's accounts. There are no separate disclosures for Publica as they are not responsible for any LGPS liability.
- Under International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) assessments have been made as to the correct accounting treatment for a number of lease agreements which the Council has entered into. Categorising leases as either operating or finance leases results in different accounting treatment depending upon the categorisation of the lease. In each case, a lease is classified based upon criteria contained within the Code and an assessment of the nature of the leasing arrangement in place.

The Council has entered into a lease-type agreement whereby it provides environmental services vehicles to Ubico Limited. Ubico pay a market-rate for the use of the vehicles and are responsible for insuring and maintaining the vehicles and determining their deployment (including use across other Ubico contracts where necessary). Ubico pay for the vehicles over a period of 7-years for new vehicles, which is deemed to be the useful economic life of the assets. The transaction has been accounted for on the basis that the agreement is a finance lease, because: i) the sum of the lease payments equal the cost of purchasing the asset; ii) the length of the term represents 'substantially all' of the useful life of the asset; and iii) the rights and responsibilities of ownership (maintenance, insurance, deployment) in relation to the vehicle assets sit primarily with Ubico Limited. This agreement has been formalised in a lease agreement between Ubico and the Council.

- The Council leases-in a small number of operational assets on 'peppercorn' or non-commercial terms. For such assets, the assets are not accounted for purely on the financial agreement (lease) in place, but include an assessment of the substance of the transaction or underlying arrangement to take account of the view that the purpose of the lease is to provide services or benefit within the district. The terms of the lease and the desire to provide beneficial services are often represented in non-commercial lease-terms being agreed.
- A significant level of risk remains due to the volume of outstanding business rates appeals which are being processed by the Valuation Office. Where appeals are successful, refunds of business rates are generally repayable back to the latest valuation date which reduces the business rates yield in the year in which the refund is made. This set of accounts includes a provision for appeal losses. The value has been assessed

ADDITIONAL DISCLOSURES – UNDERSTANDING THE ACCOUNTS

using information of outstanding appeals supplied by the valuation office, as at 31st March 2021, and using experience of previous appeals rates. The Council's share of the the liability stands at £1,229,168.

- Grants are only recognised as income in the CIES, where the Council is acting as a principal. If the Council is acting as an intermediary (agent), then the net balance of monies to either be repaid or due to the council, will be shown on the balance sheet. It is deemed the Council is acting as a principal if they have control of a grant i.e. the ability to direct the use of and obtain substantially all of the remaining benefits from the grant. Following the receipt of a grant the Council had to determine whether in administering the grant it was acting as an agent or principal.

Where the Council was acting as agent the following conditions applied:

- It was acting as an intermediary between the recipient and the Government Department;
- It did not have "control" of the grant conditions and there was no flexibility in determining the level of grant payable.

Where the Council acted as principal, it was able to use its own discretion when allocating the amount of grant payable. The narrative report (page 5) highlights the business grants where the Council is acting as either the principal or agent.

F7. Accounting standards not yet adopted

The Code requires changes in accounting policy to be applied retrospectively unless alternative transitional arrangements are specified in the Code. There is also the requirement for an authority to disclose information relating to the impact of an accounting change that will be required by a new standard that has been issued but not yet adopted.

Changes to the 2020/21 code are limited to:

- Definition of a Business: Amendments to IFRS 3 Business Combinations
- Interest Rate Benchmark Reform: Amendments to IFRS 9, IAS 39, IFRS 7, IFRS 4 and IFRS 16
- Interest Rate Benchmark Reform Phase 2: Amendments to IFRS 9, IAS 39, IFRS 7, IFRS 4 and IFRS 16

These changes are not expected to have a material impact on the Council

ADDITIONAL DISCLOSURES – UNDERSTANDING THE ACCOUNTS

F8. Assumptions and Other Major Sources of Estimation

The Statement of Accounts contains estimated figures that are based on assumptions made by the Authority about the future or that are otherwise uncertain. However, because balances cannot be determined with certainty, actual results could be materially different from the assumptions and estimates. Significant assumptions affecting the statement of accounts include:

Item	Uncertainties	Effect if actual result differs from assumption
<p>Property, Plant & Equipment – Operational Property</p>	<p>Asset valuations are based on market prices and are periodically reviewed to ensure that the Council does not materially misstate its non-current assets.</p> <p>The Valuer has stated that valuations have been prepared in accordance with RICS Valuation standards and recommendations contained within the RICS Red Book.</p> <p>Following the outbreak of Covid 19 and subsequent UK Government imposed lockdown measures the property market has faced unprecedented challenges. Financial support has been offered to businesses to keep them afloat during the pandemic during which time there has been a seismic shift toward home working for those that are able to do so and a mass closure of retail, leisure and hospitality venues.</p> <p>In context of the Council's Property Portfolio the Valuer has assessed the impairment risk by sector and individual asset. Due to changes in the office market it has been considered prudent to revalue all assets within this sector. The majority of these assets are held as Investment Property which are valued annually. It has been considered prudent to include these assets in the revaluation for this accounting period.</p> <p>Although the Council's car parks are free to use the requirement for the total number of car park spaces has reduced. Car parks have been revalued for 2021 as per the periodic rotation of assets by sector.</p> <p>The remainder of the portfolio has been assessed and it has been confirmed that there has been no further material changes to the portfolio that is considered sufficient to affect the unvalued portion.</p> <p>Operational Assets are depreciated over the best estimate of an asset's useful economic life. These asset lives are based upon assumed repairs and maintenance being carried out to maintain an asset.</p>	<p>A reduction in the estimated valuations would result in reductions to the Revaluation Reserve /and or a loss recorded as appropriate in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. If the value of the Council's operational properties were to reduce by 10%, this would be unlikely to result in a significant charge to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement due to the level of revaluation reserve balance held of approximately £33m.</p> <p>An increase in estimated valuations would result in increases to the Revaluation Reserve and/or reversals of previous negative revaluations to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and/or gains being recorded as appropriate in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.</p> <p>If the useful economic life of an asset is reduced, depreciation increases and the carrying value of an asset will fall. Depreciation charges for operational buildings will change in direct relation to changes in estimated current value. The net book value of non-current assets subject to potential revaluation is over £66m.</p>
<p>Fair Value measurement of Investment Property</p>	<p>This includes developing estimates and assumptions consistent with how market participants would price the property. The valuers base their assumption on observable data as far as possible, but this is not always available. In that case, the valuers use the best information available.</p> <p>In 2020/21 Covid 19 impacted on rental income and assumptions for 2021/22 have been adjusted to assume rent free and void periods. It is now approximately 1 year after the introduction of lockdown measures in the UK.</p>	<p>Estimates for fair values may differ from the actual prices that could be achieved in an arm's length transaction at the reporting date.</p>

ADDITIONAL DISCLOSURES – UNDERSTANDING THE ACCOUNTS

	<p>Where possible, evidence has been used for transactions that have taken place post Covid 19. Where evidence has not been available, pre Covid data has been used and, if appropriate adjusted.</p> <p>Whilst it is no longer considered appropriate to include a “Material Uncertainty” clause it is noted that there is a greater chance of market volatility than pre pandemic. The valuation of the portfolio will therefore be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure values remain materially accurate.</p>	
Pension Liability	<p>The estimation of the pension liability is based upon a number of factors and judgements applied by the scheme’s actuary including discount rate used, rate of salary increases, changes in retirement ages, mortality rates and expected return on Pension Fund investments. Estimates are made upon judgements and conditions as seen by the actuary at a point in time.</p> <p>The Council has engaged Hymans Robertson as its consulting actuary to provide expert advice about the assumptions to be applied.</p>	<p>The effect of changing assumptions will result in changes in the valuation of the pension funds’ assets and liabilities.</p> <p>For further details of the impact of variations in key assumptions, see note F1.</p>

Where other assumptions have been made these will be disclosed in the appropriate note to the accounts.

F9. Contingent Liabilities and Contingent Assets

The Council has no significant contingent assets or liabilities to report.

F10. Related Parties

The Council is required to disclose material transactions with related parties – i.e. bodies or individuals that have the potential to control or influence the council or to be controlled or influenced by the council. Disclosure of these transactions allows readers to assess the extent to which the council might have been constrained in its ability to operate independently or might have secured the ability to limit another party’s ability to bargain freely with the Authority.

Central Government

Central government has effective control over the general operations of the Authority – it is responsible for providing the statutory framework within which the Authority operates, provides a significant element of the Council’s funding in the form of grants and prescribes the terms of many transactions that the Authority has with other parties (e.g. council tax bills and housing benefits). Details of any significant grants received in the year are listed under Note B9, *Grant Income*.

Members of the Council

Members of the council have direct control over the council’s financial and operating policies. The total of Members’ allowances paid in 2020/21 is disclosed in Note B6, *Members’ Allowances*.

All elected Members are required to complete a questionnaire detailing any areas where potential conflicts of interest may occur between their private interests and their position as the elected representatives of the Council. Details are recorded in the register of members’ interest, open to public inspection at the Council Offices during office hours.

ADDITIONAL DISCLOSURES – UNDERSTANDING THE ACCOUNTS

- Seven Members declared an interest as a Town, Parish or County Councillor where precepts were awarded during 2020/21.

Officers

By virtue of the Officer Code of Conduct, employees of the Council are required to declare any relationship with individuals, organisations or companies that might prejudice, or could be viewed as influencing, their professional judgement. On an annual basis, senior officers and officers within positions of influence within the Council are required to complete a related party declaration to highlight any potential conflicts of interest.

Declarations are sought even where no conflicts of interest have been reported. There were no declarations that required further disclosure in this statement of accounts.

Cotswold District Council

Up until November 2017 the Council shared a number of senior staff with Cotswold District Council. On the 1st November the majority of the Council's staff TUPE-transferred to Publica Group (Support) Limited. Following the transfer the Council now only share the legal function, counter fraud unit and up until June 2020 a shared Chief Finance Officer.

For the first quarter of 2020/21 West Oxfordshire District Council shared its Chief Finance Officer (CFO) with Cotswold District Council under a joint working relationship. The CFO was an employee of, and paid by, Cotswold District Council. While the Officer was shared and had influence in both Cotswold District Council and West Oxfordshire District Council, she was required to act separately for each Council. Decisions on overall policy and the strategic direction are set by Cabinet and Council in each Council, with the CFO enacting their will.

From June 2020 this arrangement ended and a dedicated Chief Finance Officer for West Oxfordshire District Council was appointed.

Publica Group (Support) Limited

Publica Group (Support) Limited (the Company), is a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee with no share capital.

West Oxfordshire District Council, along with Cotswold, and Forest of Dean District Councils and Cheltenham Borough Council have jointly set up Publica Group (Support) Limited, a wholly owned company, limited by guarantee, operating with Mutual Trading Status to deliver services on behalf of the Council and services to other members Councils under contract.

Publica Group (Support) Limited is a Teckal company fulfilling the conditions set out in Regulation 12(4) of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. The Company is subject to management supervision by the Members. As such, the Company is a body governed by public law as defined in the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

While Publica Group (Support) Limited works closely with the Council, the company has its own board of Directors, its own Management team, and operates independently from the Council.

Ubico Limited

Ubico Limited was established in 2011/12 by Cheltenham Borough Council and Cotswold District Council to deliver a range of integrated environmental services including household and commercial refuse collection, recycling, street cleansing and grounds maintenance. It commenced operations on 1 April 2012.

During 2015/16 West Oxfordshire District Council became a shareholder of Ubico Limited. The Council holds an equal 1/7th shareholding in the Company.

The company provides services to the shareholder councils on a not-for-profit basis and therefore qualifies for the teckal exemption (named after the EU case that established the principle). As a teckal company, Ubico Limited must ensure that the percentage of work undertaken outside of the shareholder contracts is less than 20% of its total activity.

ADDITIONAL DISCLOSURES – UNDERSTANDING THE ACCOUNTS

While the Council has a 1/7th shareholding in Ubico Limited, and a place on the Board of Ubico Limited, the Council is not deemed to have significant influence over the company. The separate operating practices, management structure and majority-voting on the Ubico board do not constitute any means of joint-control over the company. The Council's interest is therefore classed as an investment in Ubico.

Other Public Bodies

The Council collects precepts on behalf of Oxfordshire County Council, Thames Valley Police & Crime Commissioner and the Town and Parish Councils within the Council area. Precepts for the County Council and Police Authority are shown in the Collection Fund. Town and Parish precepts are shown in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Account.

The Local Government Pension Scheme (of which West Oxfordshire is a member) is administered by Oxfordshire County Council (see note F1).

The Wychwood Project

The Wychwood Project is a registered charity that aims to inspire people to restore and conserve habitats and landscapes within the Wychwood area which covers 120 sq miles, mostly in the West Oxfordshire District. The Council provided a Community Revenue Grant of £30,000 to the Wychwood Project in 2020/21 and a West Oxfordshire District Council Councillor is a trustee.

THE COLLECTION FUND

This "Agent's" statement shows the transactions of the Council as a billing authority in relation to the collection from taxpayers and distribution to local authorities and the Government of Council Tax and National Non Domestic Rates (Business Rates).

2019/2020				Note	2020/2021		
Business Rates £	Council Tax £	Total £			Business Rates £	Council Tax £	Total £
(38,870,889)	(82,255,597)	(82,255,597)	Council Tax receivable	G1		(87,494,834)	(87,494,834)
(777,409)		(777,409)	Business Rates Receivable	G2	(22,521,172)		(22,521,172)
713,500		713,500	Transitional Protection Receipts		(200,176)		(200,176)
			Contribution to previous year's deficit / (Surplus)		618,845		618,845
(38,934,798)	(82,255,597)	(121,190,395)	Total Income		(22,102,503)	(87,494,834)	(109,597,337)
			<u>Apportionment of previous year's surplus</u>				
0	0	0	Central Government				0
	54,886	54,886	West Oxfordshire District Council			78,513	78,513
	440,424	440,424	Oxfordshire County Council			633,150	633,150
	56,290	56,290	Thames Valley Police & Crime Commissioner			88,919	88,919
0	551,600	551,600			0	800,582	800,582
			<u>Precepts, Demands and Shares</u>				
18,832,340		18,832,340	Central Government		19,586,176		19,586,176
15,065,871	7,940,154	23,006,025	West Oxfordshire District Council		15,668,940	8,552,271	24,221,211
3,766,468	64,031,529	67,797,997	Oxfordshire County Council		3,917,235	67,643,014	71,560,249
0	8,992,480	8,992,480	Thames Valley Police & Crime Commissioner			9,578,007	9,578,007
37,664,679	80,964,163	118,628,842			39,172,351	85,773,292	124,945,643
			<u>Charges on the Collection Fund</u>				
187,274	121,285	308,559	Write-offs of uncollectable amounts		445,176	39,761	484,937
(402,555)	149,796	(252,759)	Increase / (decrease) in Bad Debt / Appeals Provisions	G3	608,173	326,135	934,308
162,547		162,547	Cost of Collection		163,212		163,212
203,127		203,127	Disregarded Amounts - Renewable Energy Schemes	G4	209,139		209,139
	0	0	Transitional Protection Payments				0
150,393	271,081	421,474			1,425,700	365,896	1,791,596
37,815,072	81,786,844	119,601,916	Total Expenditure		40,598,051	86,939,770	127,537,821
(1,119,726)	(468,753)	(1,588,479)	(Surplus) / Deficit for the Year		18,495,548	(555,064)	17,940,484
1,316,304	(569,336)	746,968	(Surplus) / Deficit brought forward		196,578	(1,038,089)	(841,511)
196,578	(1,038,089)	(841,511)	(Surplus) / Deficit carried forward	G5	18,692,126	(1,593,153)	17,098,973

NOTES TO THE COLLECTION FUND

G1. Council Tax System

Under the council tax system, West Oxfordshire District Council must collect enough money each year from local residents to cover the cost of the services we provide, which are not funded by other sources such as government grants and fees and charges.

Council Tax was introduced on 1 April 1993, and is a property based tax. The District Valuer valued all domestic property in the area and placed them into one of nine bands. In order to set the Council Tax, the Council estimates the number of dwellings in each of the nine valuation bands and convert these estimates into an “equivalent number of Band D dwellings”. The table below shows the calculation for 2020/21.

Band	Total Chargeable Dwellings	Band 'D' Conversion	Band 'D' Equivalent Chargeable Dwellings	New Regulation Adjustments	New Band D Equivalent Chargeable Dwellings
A*	2.75	5/9	1.53	0.00	1.53
A	1,181.75	6/9	787.83	42.33	830.16
B	4,091.50	7/9	3,182.28	27.22	3,209.50
C	14,867.25	8/9	13,215.33	87.56	13,302.89
D	10,758.04	1	10,758.04	-2,424.77	8,333.27
E	6,676.75	11/9	8,160.47	101.45	8,261.92
F	3,874.25	13/9	5,596.14	80.16	5,676.30
G	2,533.50	15/9	4,222.50	129.17	4,351.67
H	315.50	2	631.00	57.00	688.00
Total	44,301.29		46,555.12	-1,899.88	44,655.24
Collection rate %					98.50%
Plus MOD contribution					932.50
TAXBASE					44,917.91

The total number of “equivalent Band D dwellings” is divided into net budget requirement to arrive at an “average Band D Tax” per dwelling. Dwellings in bands below “Band D” will pay proportionately less than this average and dwellings in bands above “Band D” will pay proportionately more than this average.

The above calculations resulted in an “average Band D Tax” of £1,936.84 per dwelling for 2020/21 (2019/20 £1,857.25 This included precepts payable to Oxfordshire County Council, the Police & Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley and West Oxfordshire District Council (but excludes amounts payable to the Town & Parish Councils within the district).

G2. National Non Domestic Rates

Under the Business Rates Retention Scheme the Council acts as both principal and agent, in that it is able to retain 40% of the net standard business rates collected within the local area as income within its own budget (net of tariff to central government), as well as 100% of net rates from properties relating to renewable energy schemes (Disregarded Amounts). The Council distributes the remaining net balance of standard business rate income to Central Government, who are allocated 50%, with the final 10% to Oxfordshire County Council

	2019/20	2020/21
Total Non Domestic Rateable Value at 31 March (£)	100,627,087	101,738,108
National Non-domestic Rate Multiplier - Higher	50.4p	51.2
National Non-domestic Rate Multiplier - Lower [Small Business]	49.1p	49.9

NOTES TO THE COLLECTION FUND

The Business Rates receivable amount on the face of the Collection Fund Account is lower than the total of Non-domestic Rateable Value multiplied by the Non-domestic Rate Multiplier due to the award of various reliefs including Small Business Rate Relief and other mandatory and discretionary rate reliefs.

G3. Tax Payers' Arrears & Provisions for Uncollectable Amounts

Provision has been made for uncollectable tax payers' debts. At 31 March the provisions on the Collection Fund were as follows:

	2019/20 £	2020/21 £
Council Tax	(1,325,145)	(1,651,281)
National Non Domestic Rates	(3,167,380)	(3,767,039)
	(4,492,525)	(5,418,320)

G4. Business Rates – Disregarded Amounts

From April 2013 the Council was allowed to retain 100% of the growth from the business rates associated with renewable energy sites. All such growth is transferred to the Council's General Fund.

G5. Collection Fund Balance Sheet Apportionment

The apportionment of the balances on the Collection Fund as at 31 March is as follows:

2020/2021	West Oxon. District Council £	Oxfordshire County Council £	Central Govt. £	Thames Valley P&CC £
Council Tax	10.0%	78.9%	0.0%	11.2%
Debtors	486,327	3,846,533		544,655
Bad Debt Provision	(164,646)	(1,302,242)		(184,393)
Prepayments and Overpayments	(121,762)	(963,062)		(136,366)
(Surplus) / Deficit at 31 March	(158,849)	(1,256,400)		(177,901)
Business Rates	40%	10%	50%	0.0%
Debtors	1,065,154	266,288	1,331,442	
Bad Debt / Appeals Provision	(1,506,816)	(376,705)	(1,883,518)	
Prepayments and Overpayments	(131,576)	(32,894)	(164,470)	
(Surplus) / Deficit at 31 March	7,476,851	1,869,215	9,346,063	

NOTES TO THE COLLECTION FUND

2019/2020	West Oxon. District Council £	Oxfordshire County Council £	Central Govt. £	Thames Valley P&CC £
Council Tax	9.8%	79.1% ▲	0.0%	11.1%
Debtors	309,462	2,495,583	n/a	350,475
Bad Debt Provision	(129,957)	(1,048,008)	n/a	(147,180)
Prepayments and Overpayments	(119,411)	(962,963)	n/a	(135,237)
(Surplus) / Deficit at 31 March	(101,805)	(820,985)	n/a	(115,298)
Business Rates	40%	10%	50% ▲	0.0%
Debtors	407,243	101,811	509,053	n/a
Bad Debt / Appeals Provision	(1,266,951)	(316,738)	(1,583,691)	n/a
Prepayments and Overpayments	(249,708)	(62,427)	(312,136)	n/a
(Surplus) / Deficit at 31 March	78,632	19,660	98,287	n/a

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2020/2021

1. SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY

West Oxfordshire District Council is responsible for ensuring that:

- Its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards;
- Public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for;
- Public money is used economically, efficiently and effectively; and
- There is a sound system of governance, incorporating the system of internal control

The Council has a Best Value duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

In discharging these responsibilities, the Council is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs, facilitating the effective exercise of its functions, and including arrangements for the management of risk.

The Council has developed and approved a code of corporate governance, which is consistent with the core principles and sub-principles as set out in the CIPFA/SOLACE “Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework (2016)” (‘the Framework’). This statement explains how the Council has complied with the code and also meets the requirements of Regulation 6(1)(a) of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (England) which requires the Council to conduct a review at least once a year on the effectiveness of its system of internal control and include a statement reporting on the review with any published Statement of Accounts.

In addition to this, CIPFA issued its “Statement on the Role of the Chief Finance Officer in Local Government (2015)”. The Annual Governance Statement (AGS) reflects compliance with this statement for reporting purposes.

2. THE PURPOSE OF THE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

The governance framework comprises the systems and processes, and culture and values, by which the Council is directed and controlled including activities through which it accounts to, engages with and leads its communities. It enables the Council to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost effective services.

The system of internal control is a significant part of the governance framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. It cannot eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives and can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an on-going process designed to:

- Identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Council’s policies, aims and objectives;
- Evaluate the likelihood of those risks occurring;
- Assess the impact should those risks occur; and
- Manage the risks efficiently, effectively and economically

The governance framework has been in place at West Oxfordshire District Council for the year ended 31st March 2021 and up to the date of approval of the Annual Statement of Accounts.

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Since March 2020 the Council has met a variety of challenges and has responded by increasing the frequency of reviews, strengthening existing capacity and adding resource and capacity where required.

The management of the Government's Covid Business Grants alone has been an unprecedented task requiring cooperation across departments such as Finance, Counter Fraud, Internal Audit, IT, Project Management, Economy and of course, Revenue and Benefits. All of this coordinated work was done in constant communication with the Senior Management Team and Council Leaders with the Section 151 Officer providing the link by attending and inputting to all project team meetings and updates. Although the grant payments themselves are coming to an end, the regular reporting on them to Government continues and the audit post assurance work is well underway.

While Publica has delivered the Financial savings that it promised over the last few years, we have jointly identified some areas where more resource was required so the Council has agreed a support package to fund immediate personnel growth in those areas ongoing.

The Council funded a package of recovery measures to assist the District. These were voted on by all Councillors from a selection of options and have been implemented to very positive and tangible benefit. These are expected to run for two years.

The Council, along with Publica and its other partner Councils, has invested in a leadership development programme which has discussed in the forum, some of the challenges facing our managers and has also provided one to one coaching for all senior staff.

In recognition of the financial challenges facing the Council with the potential funding cuts contained in the spending review, the Council has not only discussed and agreed an investment strategy designed to provide additional long term revenue streams, it has also relinquished the S151 Officer it shared with Cotswold District Council and invested in one dedicated to West Oxfordshire District Council alone.

Since March 2020, the Council has been managing the impact of Covid-19 which has had a significant impact on the Council, its residents and businesses. The Council changed the way it delivered existing services, and was innovative in the creation of new services in order to meet the needs of businesses and residents.

3. THE GOVERNANCE ENVIRONMENT

The key elements of the Council's governance arrangements are outlined in the Local Code of Corporate Governance. The governance framework includes arrangements for:

- Identifying and communicating the Council's vision of its purpose and intended outcomes for citizens and service users;
- Reviewing the Council's vision and its implications for the Council's governance arrangements;
- Measuring the quality of services for users, ensuring that they are delivered in accordance with the Council's objectives and ensuring that they represent the best use of resources;
- Defining and documenting the roles and responsibilities of the executive (Cabinet), non-executive, scrutiny and officer functions, with clear delegation arrangements and protocols for effective communication;
- Developing, communicating and embedding codes of conduct, defining the standards of behaviour for members and staff;

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

- Reviewing and updating Financial Rules, Contract Rules, Constitution, Scheme of Delegation and supporting procedure notes / manuals, which clearly define how decisions are taken and the processes and controls required to manage risks;
- Ensuring effective counter-fraud and anti-corruption arrangements are developed and maintained;
- Ensuring the Council's financial management arrangements conform with the governance requirements of the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government (2015);
- Undertaking the core functions of an Audit Committee, as identified in CIPFA's Audit Committees: Practical Guidance for Local Authorities;
- Ensuring compliance with relevant laws and regulations, internal policies and procedures, and that expenditure is lawful;
- Whistleblowing and for receiving and investigating complaints;
- Identifying the development needs of members and senior officers in relation to their strategic roles, supported by the appropriate training;
- Establishing clear channels of communication with all sections of the community and other stakeholders, ensuring accountability and encouraging open consultation; and
- Incorporating good governance arrangements in respect of partnerships, including shared services and other joint working and reflecting these in the Council's overall governance arrangements.

The main areas of the Council's governance framework, and the key evidence of delivery, are set out below, under the headings of the core principles and sub-principles from the CIPFA/SOLACE "Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework (2016)

A. Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law

- Behaving with Integrity
- Demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values
- Respecting the rule of the law

- The roles and responsibilities of Members generally and all office holders are set out in the Council's Constitution, along with the way in which the various elements of the Council interact and complement each other. The Constitution is supported and underpinned by a separate Code of Conduct for Members and a joint Member / Officer Protocol, which sets out guidelines as to behaviour and practical issues. This is further supported by Publica's Business Conduct rules which set out guidelines for staff on behavioural issues.
- Declarations are made at meetings by Members and Officers, where appropriate, and are recorded in the minutes of the meeting. The Members' Code of Conduct requires Members to make declarations of interest when necessary, these are also recorded.
- Registers of interest are completed annually by Members and published on the Council's website. A register of gifts and hospitality received by Members is maintained by the Monitoring Officer.
- An employee declaration is completed annually by all staff. A register of gifts and hospitality is maintained by Human Resources.
- The Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer report directly to the Head of Paid Service and are members of the Corporate Leadership Team.

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- Internal audit reviews are designed to ensure services are complying with internal and external policies and procedures / statutory legislation. Where non-compliance is identified, this is reported to Management and to Members via the Council's Audit Committee.
- The current whistleblowing policies were ratified by the Audit and General Purposes Committee. A counter-fraud unit working across Gloucestershire and West Oxfordshire helps prevent and detect fraud and corrupt practices, including misuse of power. The service reports to the Audit and General Purposes Committee and the Publica Board twice a year.
- The Council put in place a robust set of emergency measures to monitor and respond to the Covid-19 pandemic, which has had an extraordinary impact across the Council, our services, residents and communities. These measures are in line with national Emergency Management protocols and involve working with partner councils and the Council's main service providers including Publica. Senior staff held weekly meetings both amongst themselves and with members to monitor and respond to the developing situation from all service areas. The Head of Paid Service used powers set out in the Constitution to enable emergency decisions to be taken. Those decisions were subject to consultation with Members as set out in the Constitution. A log of decisions taken was subsequently presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- Meetings are minuted, with decisions and key actions recorded appropriately. The Council continues to publish key decisions, in line with legal best practice. The Council has implemented regular updates to and conversations with Members and across the organisation, with extended use of video conference call platforms as well as mass emails.
- The Communications service has been fully mobilised to ensure communications through all our channels to support public health advice / information and council service and support information to reach audiences externally and internally. A bespoke Communications strategy was quickly put in place to help key audiences feel 'informed, reassured, safe and inspired', and this has been evaluated and adapted as the pandemic situation developed.

B. Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement

- Openness
 - Engaging comprehensively with institutional stakeholders
 - Engaging with individual citizens and service users effectively
- Annual accounts are published in a timely manner to help communicate the Council's financial position and performance.
 - The Council's Corporate Plan 2019-2023 (approved by full Council in December 2019) is available to the public on the Council's website.
 - All Committee, Cabinet and Council reports clearly outline their purpose, so the community can understand what is trying to be achieved. Reports also address financial, legal, equalities, risk and climate change implications to aid understanding of the potential impact of their recommendations.
 - The roles and responsibilities of the executive (Cabinet), non-executive, scrutiny and officer functions are defined in the Council's Constitution
 - A Scheme of Delegation for officers is included within the Constitution. This is currently under review with a working group developing and proposing a new, comprehensive Scheme of Delegation. This work is expected to still be ongoing at the time of accounts signing.
 - Communication channels with staff include one-to-one and team meetings (held via video-conference this year), a weekly update email from Directors (Keeping you connected) and an online portal (intranet).
 - A Customer Feedback form is available publicly for handling comments, complaints and compliments and the Council's website includes different ways for customers to give feedback or access services. A customer satisfaction survey is carried out throughout the year on the telephone service provided, with the Council consistently receiving high satisfaction scores.

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- Ensuring clear channels of communication with all sections of the community and other stakeholders
- The ability for members of the public to ask questions at Cabinet meetings, Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings and meetings of the Full Council.
- A report is produced quarterly regarding the performance of the Council's services and the achievement of its aims and objectives. The report is presented to the Cabinet and published on the Council's website. This report is currently under review with the intention to create and report on new key performance indicators to ensure that, in particular, the priorities set out on the Council plan and Cabinet's highest short term priorities are monitored and reported on.
- The Council publishes transparency data on its website which includes supplier payments, senior management structure charts and the Annual Pay Policy Statement. Where data is not available in the published data sets, instructions are available on how to make a Freedom of Information request and the procedure that will be followed to answer the request.
- Restrictions imposed as a result of the pandemic disrupted the normal democratic meeting and decision making procedures for several months. Emergency powers contained within the Council's Constitution provided the necessary facilities to allow decisions to be made by the Head of Paid Service and/or the S.151 Officer in consultation with the Council Leader, with a report being made to the next available meeting.
- Although Committee meetings had to be suspended for the initial few months of the pandemic, the Cabinet, full Council and committees with decision making powers were able to be convened using remote participation by video conference from June 2020 with all Councillors being supported by IT to ensure they could attend and participate in all meetings as appropriate..

C. Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits

- Defining outcomes
- Sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits
- The Council's corporate priorities, expressed in its Corporate Plan as high level areas of focus, set out what the Council hopes to achieve; on its own or in partnership with others. These priorities are supported by the Code of Corporate Governance as good governance should underpin all the work of the Council.
- An annual business planning process is also conducted by Publica, which is informed by the corporate priorities, legislation and government guidance.
- All the areas of focus (corporate priorities) are underpinned by the following principles:
 - Creating social value - we will consider the social, economic, environmental and biodiversity impacts of any activity or venture and in all our decision making
 - Considering our impact on climate change – we will consider the impact on climate change in all our decision-making, aiming to make the council (and the District) carbon neutral by 2030
 - Seeking value for money – we will aim for the highest quality and for the best value in all our decision-making to secure financial sustainability for the council and therefore secure service delivery for the future by thinking about both short and longer term implications.
- Detailed proposals arising from the corporate priorities are individually assessed and are included within decision making reports.
- The financial implications of delivering against the Council's priorities are included within the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy, revenue budgets and capital programme. These key financial documents are updated annually in advance of the forthcoming financial year. Variance to budget is reported quarterly and the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the Capital Programme are updated at appropriate intervals throughout the year.
- The Council recognises that the Covid-19 crisis has had a significant impact and will have a long term effect on the level of resources available to the Council. As part of its Medium Term Financial

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Strategy (MTFS) the Council will continue to assess its medium term financial position and update its assumptions about the resources available to, and the investment needs of, the Council in light of the consequences of the Covid-19 crisis.

- The Council is also facing financial pressure from a combination of additional cost and lost income. In response to the Covid-19 emergency, the Government announced financial support packages for businesses, including those in the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors. The support took the form of more than 10 different grant funding schemes and business rate exemptions. Local authorities were responsible for administering these schemes in compliance with Government guidelines.
- The Covid-19 crisis has also had a financial impact on the Council's delivery of capital projects.. A Recovery and Regeneration Investment Strategy was approved by the Council in July 2020, which will assist in guiding decisions on the best use of capital resources to support Council priorities.

D. Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes

- Determining interventions
- Planning interventions
- Optimising achievement of intended outcomes

- The Council has, with three other councils, created a company, Publica Group (Support) Ltd, to deliver more efficient and improved services. Where appropriate, processes have been/are being aligned to ensure consistency across the partner councils, without compromising local priorities. In recognition that Publica is the most significant contractor of the Council, the Council monitors its performance by:
 - Considering Publica's Annual Report at Council;
 - Considering Publica's draft Business Plan annually at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet in February/March each year;
 - Requiring representatives from Publica to attend relevant Scrutiny Committee(s) to support discussion on quarterly performance reports;
- In addition to the creation of Publica, the Council continues to secure savings through improved use of its assets and investments
- The Council has processes in place to identify and respond to external changes, for example: changes to legislation and regulation, emerging risks and opportunities. Corporate processes such as risk management, performance management processes, budget monitoring and other management processes are designed to capture and incorporate these external factors and to enable the Council to respond appropriately.
- The Strategic Risk Register is reviewed regularly by the Local Leadership Team and reported to the Audit Committee. This risk log is also under review to ensure that all organisational risks are able to be escalated and that the risks contained on it are current, relevant, comprehensive and mitigated.
- Projects and services retain their own risk registers and elevate any high/red risks to the Local Leadership Team for consideration.
- Key performance indicators are identified and reported quarterly.

- Budgets are prepared annually in accordance with objectives, strategies and the Medium Term Financial Strategy, following consultation with customers, stakeholders and officers.
- The Medium Term Financial Strategy is a live document and can be reviewed, updated and reported as necessary, to respond to the changing environment.
- The Council continues to monitor and analyse the impact of Covid-19 as part of its ongoing review of risks and challenges and the impact it has had on our strategic priorities, including financial, service delivery, and health and wellbeing. Recovery projects are underway and address not only current challenges but seek to progress both the Council and the District's ongoing recovery. In line with the Council Plan, the Council will continue to work with residents to recover from both the health and economic crisis.

E. Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it

- Developing the entity's capacity
- Developing the capability of the entity's leadership and other individuals

- One of the reasons behind the creation of Publica was to increase capacity across the four partner councils by sharing common processes and procedures and eliminating (as far as possible) single points of failure. By working in partnership, the Councils are able to share the cost of commissioning bespoke, specialist advice.
- The move to provision of services via wholly owned companies is providing the opportunity to engage with a number of Non-Executive Directors that bring a wealth of experience from a range of different economic sectors.
- There is a Scheme of Delegation at Member level covering the Council, Cabinet, individual Cabinet Members and other committees. Similarly, there is a scheme of delegation for officer decisions at Executive, Non-Executive and Regulatory meetings. These are reviewed and revised as structures change.
- Financial rules are in place and are reviewed and revised as required.
- An induction programme is available to new employees and Members alike. Training is also provided for both Members and Officers on an on-going basis as appropriate and necessary. Members on certain Committees (e.g. Planning and Licensing) are required to undertake training before attending the Committee meetings.
- Training is also provided for officers on an on-going basis as appropriate and necessary. During 2020/21 all training took place via video conference and e-learning.

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- The Head of Paid Service, the Section 151 Officer, the Monitoring Officer and the Leader of the Council have clear responsibilities. Roles and responsibilities are contained within the Constitution along with the Member/Officer Protocol.

F. Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management

- Managing risk
- Managing performance
- Robust internal control
- Managing data
- Strong public financial management

- The Local Leadership Team reviews the Strategic Risk Register on a quarterly basis. The Strategic Risk Register is reported to the Audit Committee on a regular basis.
- Risks are identified when undertaking Internal Audit reviews and reported when necessary.
- Risks relating to the Covid-19 pandemic and the planned recovery of the Council following the major disruption to its services were identified. A register of Covid-19 risks was managed and reviewed weekly by Publica on behalf of its client Councils.
- Performance Management measures the quality of service for users to ensure services are delivered in accordance with the Council's objectives and represent best use of resources.
- Performance is measured on a regular basis and reported to Members and Cabinet.
- Minutes of meetings are published and highlight the challenge made by Members to Officers and to Cabinet Members.
- The Internal Audit service is provided by SWAP Internal Audit Services and is run in partnership with other local authorities.
- A risk-based Audit Plan is drafted annually following consultation with Officers, Members and the S151 Officer. The Audit Plan is approved at the Audit Committee prior to the financial year.
- Audit reports, once completed, are discussed with the service manager. Executive summaries, including findings, and progress on the Annual Plan are reported to the Audit Committee, on a quarterly basis.
- Recommendations made in audit reports are followed up 6 months after the completion of the audit and priority 1 and 2 findings are reported to the Audit Committee.
- The Audit Committee's Terms of Reference are contained within the Constitution, Members have experience of a scrutiny role and training is provided when appropriate.
- A Counter Fraud Unit supports all the Gloucestershire Local Authorities, West Oxfordshire District Council and other third parties. Where investigations identify possible improvements to the internal control framework the Counter Fraud Unit will liaise with the Internal Audit team to ensure the improvements are followed up and implemented by management.
- An ICT Audit and Compliance Manager has been appointed as the Council's Data Protection Officer and therefore has responsibility for Data Protection policies and ensuring that officers are informed and appropriately trained.
- Audit reviews ensure data is held securely whether electronically or hard-copy.
- The MTFS is reviewed and updated on a regular basis to ensure the Section 151 Officer, Head of Paid Service and Members are aware of the financial standing of the Council.

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G. Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability

- **Implementing good practice in transparency**
- **Implementing good practices in reporting**
- **Assurance and effective accountability**

- Data in respect of transparency is published on the Council's website.
- The Council's Statement of Accounts is produced and published annually in accordance with statutory legislation. Aligned with this is the production of the Annual Governance Statement which identifies how the Council has met its governance reporting obligations
- External Audit recommendations are reported to Audit Committee, following the completion of their annual audit process, follow-ups of recommendations are also reported
- Internal Audit processes ensure compliance with Public Sector Internal Auditing Standards. Internal Audit recommendations are followed-up and reported to the Audit Committee, further follow-up is planned if recommendations have not been actioned in full.

4. REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS

The Council has responsibility for conducting, at least annually, a review of the effectiveness of its governance framework including the system of internal control. The review of effectiveness is informed by the work of the senior managers, the annual opinion from the Head of Internal Audit, the officer Corporate Governance Group and comments made by the external auditors, other review agencies and inspectorates.

The Council's process for maintaining and reviewing the effectiveness of the governance framework has included the following:

Executive Directors, Group Managers, Business Managers and Statutory Officers are required to complete an Annual Assurance Statement at the end of the financial year. These governance declarations provide appropriate management assurance that key elements of the system of internal control are in place and are working effectively and help to identify areas for improvement.

Local Leadership Team (including the Section 151 Officer and the Monitoring Officer) reviews the Strategic Risk Register on a quarterly basis and Service/Project Risk Registers are maintained by each Group/Business Manager.

The SWAP Assistant Director (Head of Internal Audit) provides the Audit Committee, as the Committee charged with governance, with an Annual Opinion on the control environment of the Council, which includes its governance arrangements.

Investigation of, and decisions on, allegations of failure to comply with the Members' Code of Conduct are considered and determined by the Monitoring Officer and/or an Independent Standards Panel.

Induction processes are carried out for newly elected Members.

Training and awareness sessions are carried out for the Audit Committee periodically.

The External Auditors (Grant Thornton) present progress reports to the Audit Committee.

The External Auditor's Annual Audit Letter and follow-up of management responses to issues raised in the Letter or other reports are overseen by the Audit Committee.

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Quarterly performance reports, including the budget position, are presented to the appropriate Member panel and Cabinet, demonstrating performance management against agreed performance indicators and budgets.

The Audit Committee reviews the Annual Statement of Accounts, including the final AGS, the Treasury Management Strategy and quarterly progress reports from both Internal Audit (SWAP) and External Audit (Grant Thornton).

Full Council approves the annual budget and reviews and approves the Treasury Management Strategy, following recommendations from the Audit Committee.

Internal Audit monitors the quality and effectiveness of systems of internal control. Audit reports include an opinion that provides management with an independent judgement on the adequacy and effectiveness of internal controls. Reports including recommendations for improvement are detailed in an action plan agreed with the relevant Business Manager/Group Manager.

The Annual Internal Audit Opinion for 2020/2021, in respect of the areas reviewed during the year, was one of “High Reasonable Assurance” that there is a generally sound system of governance, risk management and control in place.

The Council’s Financial Rules and Contract Rules are kept under review and revised periodically.

Other explicit review/assurance mechanisms, such as the Annual Report from the Local Government Ombudsman and reports from SWAP or Grant Thornton are also reviewed.

5. REVIEW OF GOVERNANCE ACTION PLAN FOR 2020/2021

When preparing its 2019/2020 statement the Council identified a number of areas which required focus and attention. These have been actively monitored throughout the year and progress by the end of March 2021 is detailed in the table below:

	Key Area of Focus	Proposed Actions	Progress
1.	Impact of Covid-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn from Covid-19 response and take forward best practice into future governance arrangements Support the community and the economic recovery of the district. Keep the Covid-19 related financial impact on the Council under review and produce revised MTFS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Covid recovery workstreams with defined deliverables have been proposed, agreed, resourced and implemented with good results. These projects are expected to run for around 2 years in total. The 2 year programme includes additional work to address Climate Change.
2.	Recovery Investment Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development and implementation of a new Investment Strategy to support corporate priorities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This 5 year strategy is underway with the first investment already completed and more under discussion.
3.	Audit recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure outstanding audit recommendations (including where timescales were affected by Covid- 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All outstanding audit recommendations have been considered by senior

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		19) are addressed and revised timescales agreed	management and are being progressed.
4.	Procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Internal Audit Procurement review focussed on the processes undertaken on behalf of Publica for the partner Councils. A number of weaknesses were identified and, although some progress has been made, further improvements are required. A task and finish group has been established by the MD of Publica to implement this and improve the commissioning framework. This is a key deliverable of the Publica Business Plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The governance group charged with this meets regularly and much progress has been made.
5.	Business Continuity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review all business continuity plans in the light of the Covid-19 experience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> These are in discussion.

6. GOVERNANCE ACTION PLAN FOR 2021/2022

In preparing this statement and reviewing the effectiveness of the governance arrangements a number of areas have been identified where the Council needs to focus attention and improve arrangements over the next financial year. These areas of work are planned to strengthen the control framework and are set out in the table below.

No.	Key Area of Focus	Planned Actions
1	Risk register	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the channels through which risks are escalated to the risk register to ensure that the contents are always current, relevant and complete.
2	Performance report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the KPIs measured on the performance report to ensure they reflect the Council's current priorities and concerns.
3	Constitution and schemes of delegation review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To review and update the Council's constitution.
4	Budget approvals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of approvers on our Finance system to ensure that all workflow approvals go to an appropriate person
5	Project and Programme Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvement of Programme Management reporting across the portfolio of Publica / Council projects focusing on the consistency, completeness and timeliness of information provided.

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7. APPROVAL OF LEADER AND HEAD OF PAID SERVICE

We have been advised on the implications of the result of the review of the effectiveness of the governance framework and that the arrangements continue to be regarded as fit for purpose in accordance with the governance framework.

Signed on behalf of West Oxfordshire District Council:

Leader of the Council

**Giles Hughes
Chief Executive**

Date:
(END)

Date:

GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

A

Accounting Period

The period of time covered by the accounts, normally a period of 12 months commencing on 1 April. The end of the accounting period is the Balance Sheet date.

Accounting Statements

The Council's Core Financial Statements and Supplementary Financial Statements.

Accruals

Sums included in the final accounts to cover income or expenditure attributable to the accounting period but for which no payment has yet been made or received at the Balance Sheet date.

Actuarial Gains and Losses (Pension Schemes)

Changes in the net pensions liability that arise because events have not matched assumptions at the last actuarial valuation or because actuarial assumptions have changed.

Amortisation

A term used to refer to the charging of the value of a transaction or asset (usually related to intangible assets or deferred charges) to the Income and Expenditure Account over a period of time, reflecting the value to the authority; similar to the depreciation charge for non-current assets.

Appointed Auditors

The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 includes a statutory requirement that a local authority's annual Statement of Accounts be subject to external review by a duly appointed external auditor. From 2018/19, the responsibility for the appointment of said external auditor has been devolved to Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSSA) for Local Government Authorities that have opted into its national scheme. Grant Thornton UK LLP is the Council's appointed auditors for the period 2018/19 to 2022/23.

Approved Institutions

Funds that are not immediately required may be invested but only with third parties meeting the credit rating criteria approved annually as part of the Council's Treasury Management Policies and Practices.

Asset

An item having value in monetary terms. See also Current Assets, Non-Current Assets and Financial Asset.

Audit of Accounts

An independent examination of the Council's financial affairs.

B

Billing Authority

A local authority responsible for collecting Council Tax and National Non-Domestic Rates.

Budget

The forecast of net revenue and capital expenditure over an accounting period.

C

Capital Expenditure

Expenditure for the acquisition, provision or improvement of non-current assets, which will be of long-term value to the Council, providing services beyond the current accounting period.

Capital Programme

The capital schemes the Council intends to carry out over a specified time period.

Capital Receipts

Money received from the disposal of non-current assets or the repayment of grants and loans, which is available for financing future capital expenditure.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Collection Fund

A statutory fund maintained by a billing authority, which is used to record local taxes and Non-Domestic Rates collected by the authority, along with payments to precepting authorities, the national pool of Non-Domestic Rates and the billing authority's General Fund.

Community Assets

Assets which the Authority intends to hold in perpetuity, that have no determinable finite useful life and that may have restrictions on their disposal, e.g. parks, historical buildings. See also Non-Current Assets.

Consistency

The concept that the accounting treatment of like items within an accounting period and from one period to the next is the same.

Contingency

Money set aside in the budget to meet the cost of unforeseen items of expenditure, or shortfalls in income.

Contingent Asset

A possible asset that arises from past events whose existence will be confirmed only by the occurrence of one or more uncertain future events not wholly within the Council's control.

Contingent Liability

A contingent liability is either:

- a possible obligation arising from past events whose existence will be confirmed only by the occurrence of one or more uncertain future events not wholly within the Authority's control; or
- a present obligation arising from past events where it is not probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required or the amount cannot be measured with sufficient liability.

Council Tax

The main source of local taxation for local authorities. Council Tax is levied on households within its area by the billing authority and the proceeds are paid into the Collection Fund for distribution to precepting authorities and the Authority's General Fund.

Creditors

Amounts owed by the Authority for works completed, goods received or services rendered before the end of the accounting period but for which payments have not been made.

Current Assets

Assets which can be expected to be consumed or realised during the next accounting period.

Current Liabilities

Amounts which will become due or could be called upon during the next accounting period.

Current Service Cost (Pensions)

The increase in the present value of a defined benefit scheme's liabilities as a result of employee service earned in the current period.

Curtailed (Pensions)

An event that reduces the expected years of future service of present employees, or reduces for a number of employees the accrual of defined benefits for some or all of their future service.

D

Debtors

Amounts due to the Authority for works completed, goods received or services rendered before the end of the accounting period but for which payments have not been received.

Depreciation

The estimated benefit of an asset consumed during the accounting period, owing to age, wear and tear, deterioration or obsolescence.

Direct Revenue Financing (DRF)

Resources provided from an authority's revenue budget to finance the cost of capital projects.

E**Equity**

The Authority's value of total assets less total liabilities.

Equity Instrument

A contract that evidences a residual interest in the assets of an entity after deducting all of its liabilities.

Events After the Reporting Period

Those (non-adjusting) events, both favourable and unfavourable, of such materiality that their disclosure is required for the fair presentation of the Statement of Accounts, which occur between the Balance Sheet date and the date on which the Accounts are signed by the responsible financial officer.

Exceptional Items

Events or transactions that fall within the ordinary activities of the Authority and need to be disclosed separately due to their size to give fair presentation of the accounts.

External Audit

The independent examination of the activities and accounts of local authorities in order to give an opinion as to whether the Statement of Accounts have been prepared in accordance with legislative requirements and proper practices, and to ensure the authority has made proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

F**Fair Value (FV)**

The price an asset could be exchanged for in an arm's length transaction less any grant.

Fees and Charges

Income raised by charging users of services for facilities, e.g. leisure centres, trade refuse, etc.

Finance Leases

A lease that transfers substantially all the risks and rewards of ownership of an asset to the lessee. Accounting guidance requires that it should be presumed that such transfer of risks and rewards occurs if at the inception of a lease the present value of the minimum lease payments including any initial payment, amounts to substantially all (normally 90% or more) of the fair value of the leased asset. The present value is calculated using the interest rate implicit in the lease.

Financial Asset

A right to future economic benefits controlled by the Authority that is represented by:

- cash
- an equity instrument of another entity
- a contractual right to receive cash (or another financial asset) from another entity
- a contractual right to exchange financial assets/liabilities with another entity under conditions that are potentially favourable to the Authority.

Financial Instruments

Any contract that gives rise to a financial asset of one entity and a financial liability or equity instrument of another entity.

Financial Liability

An obligation to transfer economic benefits controlled by the Authority that is represented by:

- a contractual obligation to deliver cash (or another financial asset) to another entity
- a contractual obligation to exchange financial assets/liabilities with another entity under conditions that are potentially unfavourable to the Authority.

G

General Fund (GF)

The main revenue fund of a billing authority, used to meet day-to-day spending.

Government Grants

Grants made by the Government towards either revenue or capital expenditure to support the cost of providing the Authority's services. These grants may be specifically towards the cost of particular schemes or to support the revenue spend of the Authority.

Gross Expenditure

The total cost of providing the Authority's services before taking into account income from government grants and fees and charges for services.

Growth

Any increase in spending from one year to another which enables the Authority to pay for more services rather than to meet higher costs.

H

Housing Benefit (Rent Allowance)

An allowance to persons on low (or no) income to meet, in whole or part, their rent. Benefit is allowed or paid by local authorities but central government refunds part of the cost of the benefit provided and of the running costs of the service to local authorities.

I

Impairment

A reduction in the carrying value of a fixed asset below its carrying value (due to obsolescence, damage or an adverse change in the statutory environment)

Income

Amounts that the Authority receives or expects to receive from any source, including fees and charges, sales and grants.

Infrastructure Assets

Non-current assets belonging to the Authority which do not necessarily have a resale value e.g. highways, and for which a useful life span cannot be readily determined.

Intangible Assets

Non-financial assets which do not have physical substance but are identified and controlled by the Authority through legal rights e.g. IT Software.

Interest Receivable

The money earned from the investment of surplus cash.

Inventories

Items of raw materials and stores an authority has procured to use on a continuing basis and which it has not yet used.

Investment Property

Land and Buildings non-current assets held only for investment potential.

J

Joint Arrangement

An arrangement under which the participants engage in joint activities but do not create a legal entity because it would not carry on a trade or business of its own.

L

Liability

A liability is where the Authority owes payment to an individual or another organisation. See also Contingent Liability, Current Liabilities and Financial Liability

Local Council Tax Support Scheme

Assistance provided by billing authorities to adults on low incomes to help pay their Council Tax bill. The cost is borne by the Council.

Long-Term Assets

Non-current and other assets which can be expected to be of use or benefit the Authority in providing its service for more than one accounting period.

Long-Term Liabilities

Amounts which will become due or could be called upon beyond the next accounting period.

M

Materiality

The concept that the Statement of Accounts should include all amounts which, if omitted, or misstated, could be expected to lead to a distortion of the financial statements to a reader.

Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP)

The minimum amount which must be charged to an Authority's revenue account each year and set aside as provision for repayment of debt as required by the Local Government Act 2003.

N

National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR)

A levy on businesses, based on a national rate in the pound set by the Government, multiplied by the rateable value of the premises they occupy.

Net Book Value (NBV)

The amount at which non-current assets are included in the balance sheet.

Net Debt

The Authority's total borrowings less cash investments.

Net Expenditure

Gross expenditure less specific service income.

Net Interest on the Net Defined Benefit Liability (Pensions)

The net interest expense - the change during the period in the net benefit liability that arises from the passage of time.

Non-Current Assets

Property, plant and equipment and other assets that bring longer term benefit or service potential to the Authority.

Non-Operational Assets

Assets held by the Authority but not directly occupied, used or consumed in the direct delivery of services, e.g. assets in the course of construction and surplus land.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

O

Operating Leases

A lease other than a Finance Lease (see above). The future obligations relating to operating leases are disclosed to provide the reader with an estimate of the outstanding un-discharged obligations in relation to such leases.

Operational Assets

Non-current assets held and occupied, used or consumed by the Authority in the direct delivery of those services for which it has a statutory or discretionary responsibility.

Outturn

Actual income and expenditure in a financial year (accounting period).

P

Past Service Costs (Pensions)

The increase in the present value of the defined benefit scheme liabilities, related to employee service in prior periods, arising as a result of, or improvement to, retirement benefits.

Pension Fund

An employees' pension fund maintained by an authority, or group of authorities, in order to make pension payments on the retirement of its participants; it is financed from contributions from the employing authority, the employee and investment income.

Precept

A levy made by one statutory body (Precepting Authority) on another to meet the net cost of its services.

Precepting Authorities

Those authorities that are not Billing Authorities; i.e. do not collect the Council Tax and National Non-Domestic Rates. Police authorities are 'major' precepting authorities and town and parish councils are 'local' precepting authorities.

Prior Period Adjustments

Material adjustments applicable to prior years arising from changes in accounting policies or from the correction of fundamental errors. A fundamental error is one that is of such significance as to destroy the validity of the financial statements. This does not include normal recurring corrections or adjustments of accounting estimates made in prior years.

Provisions

Amounts set aside for the purposes of providing for any liability or loss which is likely or certain to be incurred but is uncertain as to the amount or the date on which it will arise, e.g. bad debts.

Prudence

The concept that income should only be anticipated to the extent that it will be received, as cash or other assets, with reasonable certainty and full and proper allowance should be made for all known and foreseeable losses and liabilities.

Prudential Code

The CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities – the guidance applicable from April 2017 for the greater freedom for authorities to borrow to fund capital investment (under the Local Government Act 2003). This Code requires the Authority to set and monitor a suite of Prudential Indicators, including its Affordable Borrowing Limit, and produce a capital strategy to give weight to local circumstances and explain their approach to borrowing and investment.

R

Rateable Value

The annual assumed rental value of a hereditament that is used for NNDR purposes.

Revenue Expenditure Funded by Capital Under Statute (REFCUS)

Expenditure of a capital nature but for which there is no tangible asset, e.g. renovation grants.

Related Parties

Two or more parties are related parties when at any time during the financial period:

- One party has direct or indirect control of the other party; or
- The parties are subject to common control from the same source; or
- One party has influence over the financial and operational policies of the other party to an extent that the other party might be inhibited from pursuing at all times its own separate interests; or
- The parties, in entering a transaction, are subject to influence from the same source to such an extent that one of the parties to the transaction has subordinated its own separate interest.

Examples of related parties to an authority include Central Government, Local Authorities and other bodies precepting or levying demands on the Council Tax, its Members, its Chief Officers and its Pension Fund.

For individuals identified as related parties, it is also presumed that members of the close family, or the same household, or any partnerships, companies in which the individual or a member of their close family, or the same household has a controlling interest, are deemed to be related parties.

Related Party Transactions

The transfer of assets or liabilities or the performance of services by, to or for a related party irrespective of whether a charge is made. The materiality of related party transactions is judged not only in terms of their significance to the Authority, but also in relation to its related party.

Reserves

Amounts set aside in the accounts for the purpose of meeting general, future expenditure. Reserves may also be used to smooth the cost of certain activities over a number of years. A distinction is drawn between reserves and provisions (see above), which are set up to meet known liabilities.

Retirement Benefits

All forms of consideration given by an employer in exchange for services rendered by employees that are payable after the completion of employment.

Return on Plan Assets (Pensions)

Changes during the period in the net benefit liability that arises from the passage of time excluding amounts included in Net Interest on the Net Defined Benefit Liability.

Revenue Expenditure

Spending on day-to-day items including employees' pay, premises and transport costs and supplies and services.

Revenue Support Grant

A general grant paid by the Government to Council's contributing towards the costs of their services.

S

Specific Grants

The term used to describe all government grants, including supplementary and special grants, to local authorities other than Revenue Support Grant and capital grants.

T

Total Cost

The actual cost of services reflecting all of the direct, indirect and overhead costs that have been incurred in providing the service, even where the expenditure is not under the control of the service's chief officer.

W

Work In Progress

The cost of work carried out on an uncompleted project at the Balance Sheet date, which should be accounted for within the accounting period.

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**WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL**

24 November 2021

Dear Sirs

**West Oxfordshire District Council
Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2021**

This representation letter is provided in connection with the audit of the financial statements of West Oxfordshire District Council for the year ended 31 March 2021 for the purpose of expressing an opinion as to whether the financial statements are presented fairly, in all material respects in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards and the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21 and applicable law.

We confirm that to the best of our knowledge and belief having made such inquiries as we considered necessary for the purpose of appropriately informing ourselves:

Financial Statements

- i. We have fulfilled our responsibilities for the preparation of the Council's financial statements in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards and the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21 ("the Code"); in particular the financial statements are fairly presented in accordance therewith.
- ii. We have complied with the requirements of all statutory directions affecting the Council and these matters have been appropriately reflected and disclosed in the financial statements.
- iii. The Council has complied with all aspects of contractual agreements that could have a material effect on the financial statements in the event of non-compliance. There has been no non-compliance with requirements of any regulatory authorities that could have a material effect on the financial statements in the event of non-compliance.
- iv. We acknowledge our responsibility for the design, implementation and maintenance of internal control to prevent and detect fraud.
- v. Significant assumptions used by us in making accounting estimates, including those measured at fair value, are reasonable. Such accounting estimates include PPE valuations, the valuation of the pension fund liability and the measurement of financial instruments. We are satisfied that the material judgements used in the preparation of the financial statements are soundly based, in accordance with the Code and adequately disclosed in the financial statements. We understand our responsibilities includes identifying and considering alternative methods, assumptions or source data that would be equally valid under the financial reporting framework, and why these alternatives were rejected in favour of the estimate used. We are satisfied that the methods, the data and the significant assumptions used by us in making accounting estimates and their related disclosures are appropriate to achieve recognition, measurement or disclosure that is reasonable in accordance with the Code and adequately disclosed in the financial statements.
- vi. We confirm that we are satisfied that the actuarial assumptions underlying the valuation of pension scheme assets and liabilities for IAS19 Employee Benefits disclosures are consistent with our knowledge. We confirm that all settlements and curtailments have been identified and properly accounted for. We also confirm that all significant post-employment benefits have been identified and properly accounted for.
- vii. Except as disclosed in the financial statements:
 - a. there are no unrecorded liabilities, actual or contingent

- b. none of the assets of the Council has been assigned, pledged or mortgaged
 - c. there are no material prior year charges or credits, nor exceptional or non-recurring items requiring separate disclosure.
- viii. Related party relationships and transactions have been appropriately accounted for and disclosed in accordance with the requirements of International Financial Reporting Standards and the Code.
- ix. All events subsequent to the date of the financial statements and for which International Financial Reporting Standards and the Code require adjustment or disclosure have been adjusted or disclosed.
- x. We have considered the adjusted misstatements, and misclassification and disclosure changes schedules included in your Audit Findings Report. The financial statements have been amended for these misstatements, misclassifications and disclosure changes and are free of material misstatements, including omissions.
- xi. We have considered the unadjusted misstatements schedule included in your Audit Findings Report. We have not adjusted the financial statements for these misstatements brought to our attention as they are immaterial to the results of the Council and its financial position at the year-end. The financial statements are free of material misstatements, including omissions.
- xii. Actual or possible litigation and claims have been accounted for and disclosed in accordance with the requirements of International Financial Reporting Standards.
- xiii. We have no plans or intentions that may materially alter the carrying value or classification of assets and liabilities reflected in the financial statements.
- xiv. We have updated our going concern assessment and cashflow forecasts in light of the Covid-19 pandemic. We continue to believe that the Council's financial statements should be prepared on a going concern basis and have not identified any material uncertainties related to going concern on the grounds that:
 - a. The nature of the Council means that, notwithstanding any intention to liquidate the group and Council or cease its operations in their current form, it will continue to be appropriate to adopt the going concern basis of accounting because, in such an event, services it performs can be expected to continue to be delivered by related public authorities and preparing the financial statements on a going concern basis will still provide a faithful representation of the items in the financial statements.
 - b. The financial reporting framework permits the entity to prepare its financial statements on the basis of the presumption set out under a) above; and
 - c. The Council's system of internal control has not identified any events or conditions relevant to going concern.

We believe that no further disclosures relating to the Council's ability to continue as a going concern need to be made in the financial statements.

Information Provided

- xv. We have provided you with:
 - a. access to all information of which we are aware that is relevant to the preparation of the financial statements such as records, documentation and other matters;
 - b. additional information that you have requested from us for the purpose of your audit; and
 - c. access to persons within the Council via remote arrangements, in compliance with the nationally specified social distancing requirements established by the government in

response to the Covid-19 pandemic, from whom you determined it necessary to obtain audit evidence.

- xvi. We have communicated to you all deficiencies in internal control of which management is aware.
- xvii. All transactions have been recorded in the accounting records and are reflected in the financial statements.
- xviii. We have disclosed to you the results of our assessment of the risk that the financial statements may be materially misstated as a result of fraud.
- xix. We have disclosed to you all information in relation to fraud or suspected fraud that we are aware of and that affects the Council, and involves:
 - a. management;
 - b. employees who have significant roles in internal control; or
 - c. others where the fraud could have a material effect on the financial statements.
- xx. We have disclosed to you all information in relation to allegations of fraud, or suspected fraud, affecting the financial statements communicated by employees, former employees, analysts, regulators or others.
- xxi. We have disclosed to you all known instances of non-compliance or suspected non-compliance with laws and regulations whose effects should be considered when preparing financial statements.
- xxii. We have disclosed to you the identity of the Council's related parties and all the related party relationships and transactions of which we are aware.
- xxiii. We have disclosed to you all known actual or possible litigation and claims whose effects should be considered when preparing the financial statements.

Annual Governance Statement

- xxiv. We are satisfied that the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) fairly reflects the Council's risk assurance and governance framework and we confirm that we are not aware of any significant risks that are not disclosed within the AGS.

Narrative Report

- xxv. The disclosures within the Narrative Report fairly reflect our understanding of the Council's financial and operating performance over the period covered by the financial statements.

Approval

The approval of this letter of representation was minuted by the Council's Audit and General Purposes Committee at its meeting on 24 November 2021.

Yours faithfully

Name.....

Position.....

Date.....

Name.....

Position.....

Date.....

Signed on behalf of the Council